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WEEKLY

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GST INCLUSIVE

OLYMPIC STOPS GLORY

By John Economos

THE OLYMPIC SHARKS pulled off a sensational shock 3-1 win last Saturday night at the Toyota Park to bring the previously undefeated Perth Glory's charge at the top to a grinding halt.

Olympic's mobile midfielder Tommy Pondeljak stunned the League-leaders as early as in the 5th minute with a goal but the Glory levelled ten minutes later through intelligent striker Bobby Despotovski.

Disaster struck the Glory in the 26th minute. Following a floating, inswinging free-kick taken by Troy Halpin into a crowded box, the Glory's sweeper Craig Deans attempting to hook the ball out, erroneously deflected into his own net.

Sixty seconds from the bell Olympic cemented its victory, plunging the Glory to its first defeat of the season when the ball-playing striker Nicky Carle, volleyed a magnificent left footed rocket that crashed inside the far post.

Olympic's quietly spoken Manager, Gary Phillips, reflected after the match: "I thought our players deserved their win as they worked hard. All our players were focussed and worked well. I thought Nicky Carle was outstanding, but it was also a great team-performance.

"I've played with Olympic years ago, and even then, Olympic seemed to struggle against the lowly teams, but against high quality sides we always seemed to do well and didn't need motivation.

"During the week we had Phil Gould, (former Roosters' Ruby League coach), gave a talk to our players twice, during the week, about competitiveness."

Phillips went on to add: "Phil spoke on things we needed to address and to sort out things if we were going to be competitive tonight.

"He spoke of the importance of being together and stressed 'tough times don't last, but tough people do'.

NICKY CARLE: Olympic's Man Of The Match, salutes his goal.

"I'm disappointed that next week we have a break as I wanted to build on this, (tonight's performance)," summed up Phillips, who himself for years was a former player at Olympic.

Meanwhile Mich D'Avray, the Glory's Manager, evaluated: "I have no complaints as we were beaten by the better team on the night. "Olympic is a tactically-minded team and I thought in the first half we were never in the game. The Red card (54th m), against Deans killed us as I thought it was a little bit harsh. It was definitely a yellow card.

"As I said, the first half we were very disappointing and had hoped to change it in the second half, but the Red card came at the wrong time and we were punished.

"You just can't play with ten men against a team such as Olympic as they have so many good players.

"Now we have two weeks (break) to get this game out of our system.

"Now with this our first loss, I think it will take a little bit of pressure off my players as people over in the West were already starting to ask if we are going to go through the season undefeated.

" You never like to lose, but we lost against a better team tonight and that's the bottom line."

When ABSW questioned D'Avray which team would most threaten the Glory for the NSL Championship, he quietly came back with: "After seeing them tonight I would think Olympic could be very dangerous if they could get their act together.

"Newcastle is another, as they now are the only unbeaten team in the League. The League is starting to take shape, but as I've said from the word go, in this League, any team is capable of beating anyone.

"Some people say that the League this season is not as good as it was.

"Having said that, I don't think that there is a single weak team in the League now," ended the Glory's phlegmatic manager.

LIZ TERRY (right), Soon to leave Soccer for a new career in Marketing. Seen here with her close Marconi working colleague and friend, Ms Gabriella Genovese. (See Page 5).

"THE GERBEC CHRISTMAS KIDS" of Croydon, NSW, would like to wis everybody involved in Australian Soccer a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year. (l to r). Kelsey Gerbec aged 3 with her brother Jack aged 2 and sister Mikayla aged 5.

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Spirit, Culina in war of words

Northern Spirit General Manager Colin Mitchell last week hit out at Sydney United Coach Branko Culina, advising him to stick to coaching, after comments he made over the future of Northern Spirit.

Culina had questioned the commitment of Northern Spirit and Parramatta Power and said both clubs would fold through a lack of passion.

"I have never heard such ridiculous comments," Colin Mitchell said. "Who is Branko Culina to be giving deep and meaningful comments about the future of our club? He should stick to his job of coaching a part-time football club and leave the running of professional clubs to people with the ability to do so.

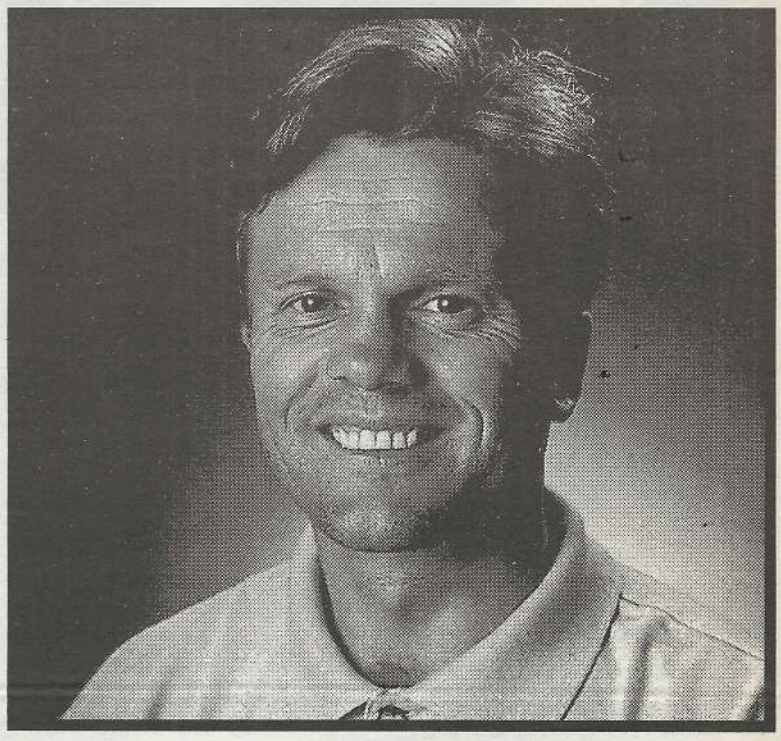
"Who is he to comment on the running of our club, our commitment to soccer and in events off the field at any club other than his own? If he wants to comment about a coaching or playing issue then fine, that is his expertise, but the running of a football club, and a professional one especially, is not his expertise at all.

"Comments like that are uneducated, damaging and completely unfounded. There is no question over the commitment by Rangers to Northern Spirit, we are even trying to help Soccer Australia in their efforts to take the game forward as a whole."

The remarks about a lack of passion are particularly curious from Culina and insulting to every player, official, coach and member of staff at Northern Spirit.

"He talks about a lack of passion. If he wants to see how passionate Northern Spirit is then he should come down to the training ground and watch the players go through a session, or watch our Coach Mick Hickman show his passion, or have a look at the efforts by the staff at Spirit, who work long hours to promote this club," Mitchell said.

"The first impression Northern Spirit left was 19,000 people at North Sydney Oval," Mitchell said. "The impression his club leaves is under a shower of flares that leaves our fans in fear of getting hit every time they (Sydney United) come to North Sydney Oval."



Branko Culina: Sydney United's underfire coach.

> *"Comments like that are uneducated, damaging and completely unfounded. There is no question over the commitment by Rangers to Northern Spirit, we are even trying to help Soccer Australia in their efforts to take the game forward as a whole."*

KINGZ MOVE FOR ENGLISH IMPORTS

Football Kingz' supremo, Kevin Fallon is on the verge of signing two new imports from England to bolster his team after watching them falter at home in late stages of two separate games.

A central defender will definitely be coming in to join the Kingz' lineup in the New Year as Fallon conceeded last week that he needed to strengthen the team's leaky defence, adding that he had already been in touch with some players in Englandwho have been identified and could join the Auckland-based club soon.

Fallon is however ruling out any move before Christmas.

"I can understand players wanting to spend the festive season at home before flying halfway around the world," he said. "It is not an easy situation. I have to go on other people's judgment.

"It is a case of crossing your fingers and hoping it will turn out right."

Fallon was however pleased with the fight shown by his players in holding unbeaten Newcastle to 2-2 in the NSL in Round 10 penultimate Friday, though he still seeks more stability and hard work at the back.

Kevin Fallon: Kingz coach.

"I have not seen a Kingz team roll up their sleeves and fight as they did on Friday night," Fallon said.

He praised goalkeeper Michael Theoklitos and striker Andy Vlahos as the class acts in the game which ended with the visitors snatching an equaliser in time added on.

Fallon also hailed veterans Harry Ngata and Chris Jackson.

Jackson has gone from a week-by-week deal to month-by-month, and will let the club know by the end of this month whether he will stay or take up an offer in Singapore.

NSW thumbs down $10 levy plan

Ahead of last weekend's stakeholders meeting of Soccer Australia, NSW's Amateur Soccer Federation (NSWASF) bigwigs met with the chairman and deputy chairman of Soccer Australia on SA's financial situation.

During the meet, the NSW executive members stated the SA move to impose a $10 levy on amateur players was not likely to get any support from the States.

NSW federation against any levy proposal, and reminded ourselves of 5-6 years ago, when the then chairman, Basil Scarsella, announced at our AGM that the original $1 levy would only be used for the national teams, and that a full accounting would be provided annually.

Some of you may recall that. Needless to say, and in spite of frequent requests, such annual statements were never provided.

NSWASF chairman Mr Jim Forrest said, "Any such proposal would have to be equitable across all States", said Mr Forrest. "Such an equitable approach should be based on the number of votes on Soccer

Australia held by each State and Territory Federation (the Amateurs have one vote). Our participation in any such scheme, if it eventuates, will ultimately be up to our members. Most importantly, my understanding is that a fee increase is only one of a number of options which will be discussed."

On the issue of helping Soccer Australia in the medium-term, Mr Forrest said the Amateurs are willing to help, by way of a loan, given reasonable assurances in the form of future financial directions for the national body.

"It is our responsibility to help if we can, and given reasonable security," he said.

Good Oil ... Good Oil ... Good Oil ...

SEPTEMBER 11th, 2001, was a day the World will never, ever, forget when New York City was viciously targetted by four mini squads of ruthless, logically twisted, suicidal terrorists that hijacked the four doomed jet planes.

Last Saturday night at Toyota Park, the venue for the Olympic Sharks' clash with League leaders the Perth Glory, 'Good Oil' spotted no less than two 'hijackers' that had quietly meandered their way into the main grandstand.

Their mission?

An attempt to 'hijack' two of the Olympic players and drag them up to their Club.

One was a defender, the other a midfielder.

However the two 'hijackers' ended up leaving Toyota Park almost empty handed.

The defender in question finally rejected the 'hijackers" offer, whilst the midfielder is still undecided, but willing to listen even further.

●●●●

LAST Saturday night at Toyota Park, both team-managers, Mich D'Avray (Glory) and Gary Phillips (Olympic), spoke amicably at the after the match Press Conference.

Phillips kicked-off with: "I thought our players deserved their win as they worked hard. All our players were focussed and worked well and I thought Nicky Carle was outstanding and it was a great team-performance. I've played with Olympic years ago and even then Olympic seems to struggle against the lowly teams, but against high quality sides we always seem to do well and we don't need motivation. I don't know what it is.

"As far as Andrew Durante I have nothing but admiration for the lad as he had suffered some type of fracture to his ankle. He decided against an operation and opted to play and came back to play tonight and do well.

"During the week we had Phil Gould, (former Roosters' Ruby League coach), twice give a talk to our players during the week about competitiveness.

"He spoke on things we needed to address and to sort out things if we were going to be competitive tonight.

"Phil spoke of the importance of being together and stressed 'tough times don't last, but tough people do'.

"I'm disappointed that next week we have a break and I wanted to build on this (tonight's performance)," summed up Phillips who himself for years was a former Olympic player.

By John Economos

Meanwhile D'Avray lamented: "I have no complaints as we were beaten by the better team on the night. Olympic is a tactically-minded team and I thought in the first half we were never in the game. The Red card (54th), against Deans killed us as I thought it was a little bit harsh. It was definitely a yellow card. As I said the first half we were very disappointing and had hope to change it in the second half but the Red card came at the wrong time and we were punished. You just can't play with ten men against a team such as Olympic as they have so many good players.

"Now we have two weeks (break) to get this game out of our system."

When questioned about a possible replacement for his international sweeper, Ljubo Milicevic, (who last Saturday signed a four year deal to play with Swiss League side, Zurich F.C.), the Glory Manager came back with:

"It could be quite difficult to replace his quality and he will be missed but we'll have to do as best we can. We have a good squad but it won't be easy replacing Ljubo's qualities and he will be missed but the Club will not be standing in his way and we wish him all the very best in his new career.

"Now with this our first loss, I think it will take a little bit of pressure off my players as people over in the West were already starting to ask if we are going to go through the season undefeated. You never like to lose but we lost against a better team tonight and that's the bottom line."

When questioned which team would threaten the Glory the most for the NSL Championship, D'Avray quietly came back with: "Well after seeing them tonight I would think Olympic could be very dangerous if they could get their act together. Newcastle is another, as they are now the only unbeaten team in the League. The League now is starting to take shape, but as I've said from the word go, in this League, any team is capable of beating anyone. "Some people say that the League this season is not as good as it was.

"Having said that, I don't think that there is a single weak team in the League now," ended the Glory's phlegmatic manager.

MICH D'AVRAY (Glory's Manager with GARY PHILLIPS (Olympic's Manager).

Foxe cops $36,000 fine

Hayden Foxe: In trouble over Christmas Party.

West Ham manager Glenn Roeder has refused to make excuses for Aussie international Hayden Foxe who was hit with a fine for urinating on the bar last week in a Christmas party.

A series of incidents during the players' Christmas party in London, ended with them being asked to leave. Foxe allegedly urinated against a bar at the club.

He has already been fined two weeks wages, thought to be about $A36,000 and has expressed remorse during a meeting with Roeder.

The manager spoke about his concerns over the behaviour of high-profile footballers.

He said: "People say it's because they are paid too much but it's nothing to do with the money they earn. They cannot use that excuse.

"We have young players who earn incredible amounts of money but who have never been in trouble like this and never will be.

Today's players have got to learn that society has changed; that people are interested in football and footballers as never before.

MILICEVIC GETS SWISS CONTRACT

Sweeper Ljubo Milicevic, who captained Australia's Young Socceroos in June's world youth championships in Argentina, confirmed Saturday he has signed a four-year deal with Swiss club FC Zurich.

"I need to play in Europe to be the best player I can be," the 20-year-old, currently with Western Australian side Perth Glory, said after being offered the contract during a trip to Switzerland this week.

"I don't think Zurich or the Swiss League is the pinnacle of Europe, but it is a stepping stone."

He said he hoped to be ready to play in Switzerland by the start of the second phase of the Swiss competition in late February.

The transfer fee is reportedly about 300,000 dollars (150,000 US).

Milicevic had earlier attracted the attention of Glasgow Rangers and German club Hertha Berlin.

He seriously injured his right knee during the Argentina championships, but is now fully rehabilitated.

Perth Glory are the runaway leaders in the Australian National Soccer League having won nine and drawn one of their first 10 matches this season.

UTS
UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, SYDNEY

State League Division 3 Season
2002 Trials

This very ambitious Club wishes to invite all interested playes to trial for positions in the

1st & 2nd Grade Squad for Season 2002

Selection Trials will be held at Edwards Park (Concord) on:
- **Sunday 16 & 23 December 2001 at 9am**
- **Sunday 6 & 13 January 2002 at 9am**

Please arrive ready to play at the designated times

For Further Information Please Contact: Danny Silvestri (M): 0438 383 159

The Leichhardt Tigers
SOCCER CLUB INC.

Women's State League 2002

IMMEDIATE VACANCIES

The Club is seeking a suitably qualified
CO ORDINATOR / CONVENOR
&
PLAYERS
(Trials will be held mid January 2002)
For our Debut Season

Applications are invited to contact the Club on 9650 5414 during business hours 0402 306 666 (A.H.) Or submit a resume to clubapia@eisa.net.au

(ONLY APPLICANTS WITH SUITABLE QUALIFICATIONS NEED APPLY)

Important Notice

AUSTRALIAN & BRITISH SOCCER WEEKLY

FOR THE NEXT TWO WEEKS

The Australian and British Soccer Weekly will be on Sale on Monday 31st December.

Please ensure that you have placed your order with your local Newsagent to reserve your copy.

The Good Oil ... The Good Oil

LAST year, 'Good Oil' found itself being forced, (and on two occasions), to launch a vitriolic attack on the stupidity of booking goalscorers if they displayed ruling of referees having to book goalscorers if they celebrated the scoring of their goal with some unusual form of excitement.

Referees had been pressured with instructions, (FIFA ruling), to flash a yellow card to any goalscorer that showed emotional exuberance such as ripping off their shirt, racing to

their supporters or releasing some other form of excitement.

The stupidity of this ruling literally 'killed' all joy for the goalscorer and deprived the same for the fan.

Well, well, guess what?

As from this season, FIFA has issued to all Conferences that this ludicrous law be largely modified.

Having said that, a goalscorer may still yet be booked if, he incites the crowd with any rude or offensive gestures made in his excitement towards the crowd.

Thankfully, some logic has finally prevailed.

●●●●

MORGAN CAWLEY, the Olympic Sharks' strapping striker, will enter hospital early in the New Year.

Since last June, the teenaged Morgan has been troubled by a mystery injury to his knee that caused perpetual swelling.

Now the doctors have traced the ailment to a small chipped bone which requires surgery and will see Cawley out of action for at least four weeks.

●●●●

JUST when all the rumours of a pending takeover of an NSL club by the lads from Leeds United was dying out, well don't believe it.

Right now, (and for the past three weeks), the lads from Elland Road have recommenced dialogue with an NSL Club.

The Sydney Club's officials flatly refuse to confirm, or deny such dialogue.

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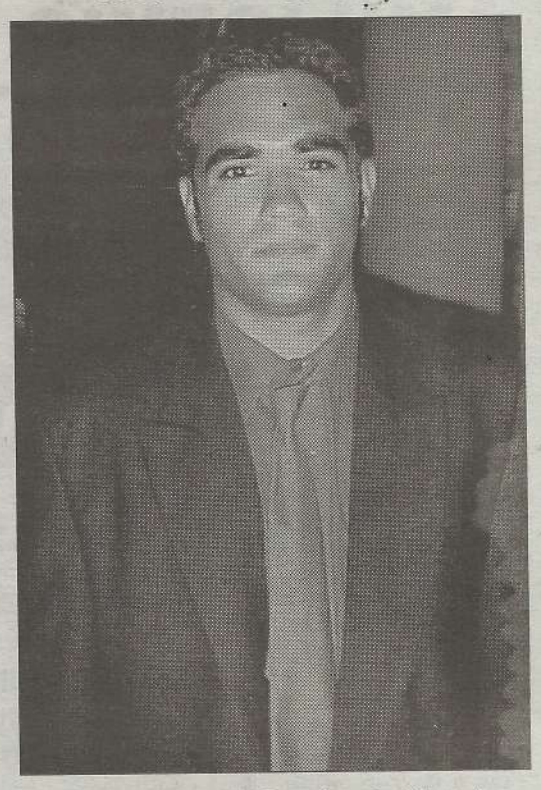


MORGAN CAWLEY: Seen here last Saturday Toyota Park but will be heading for surgery.

SOUTH MELBOURNE's management has rescheduled their following home games:

Round 15...vs Kingz is now to be played on Friday 18th January at 7.30pm.

By John Economos

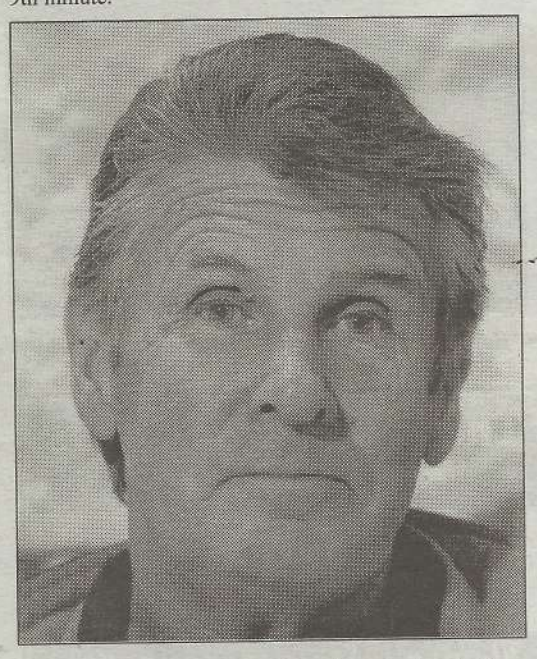
MEHMET DURAKOVIC: South's quality central marker.

Round 19...vs Northern Spirit now to be played on Friday 15th February at 7.30pm.

●●●●

WOLLONGONG WOLVES, the League's current Champions, bounced back onto the winning trail last Friday night with a solid 1-3 victory over South Melbourne.

Ironically it was South that opened the scoring through striker Peter Buljan as early as in the 9th minute.



RONNIE CORRY: Back on the winning trail.

However Ronnie Corry's Wolves staged a powerful second half comeback to rattle in goals through Alex Castro (56th), Dino Mennillo (82) and cemented their three very precious League points right on fulltime with a third from Paul Reid.

●●●●

GABRIEL MENDEZ, was surprisingly released last week by his Club the Northern Spirit.

In a flash late last week, Sydney United moved in and snapped up 'Chi Chi', a wonderful playmaker.

The Spirit's loss has now become United's gain.

●●●●

WHO is the former Australian World Cup player that sent out, not one, but TWO Christmas Cards to the same person.

He'd already sent his friend one card the week before.

But last week the former International couldn't remember if he had sent one or not.

So to make absolutely sure, he wrote out another Card and sent it to his mate with the enclosed note:

"If I sent you one already last week, keep this one aside for next year."

Do we detect a trace of Alzheimer's?

●●●●

GABRIEL MENDEZ: Signs for Sydney United.

Offices closed last Friday for the Christmas and New Year holidays.

The Federation advised us to inform all our readers that their Offices will re-open for business on Wednesday 2nd January, 2002.

In case of any emergencies, one may call the State Federation's General manager, Mr Robert Waddell on 0438 020 588.

ROBERT WADDELL: General manager of the NSW Soccer Federation.

THE NSW SOCCER FEDERATION's

The Good Oil ... The Good Oil ...

ZORAN MATIC, Adelaide City's mercurial master coach, (of all days), celebrates his Birthday tomorrow, Christmas Day, would you believe?

Highly rated by many astute judges as being one of Australia's best and experienced coaches, Matic first took over the coaching reins at Adelaide City back in 1986.

In his very first season with the 'Black and Whites' he won the League Championship, beating Sydney Olympic over a two legged Grand Final.

Astoundingly in these Grand Finals, Matic lost the first leg at Hindmarsh Stadium 0-1. Being the unyielding guy that he is, Zoran recoiled with a vengeance in the second leg at the Parramatta Stadium to topple the now hot-favourites Olympic, 1-3.

In his first tenure of his ten consecutive seasons with Adelaide, Matic repeated his League Championship winning feat in 1992 as well as in '94 to give him a treble.

In ten consecutive seasons Matic has lifted 'The Black and Whites' into no less than five Grand Finals, winning three and losing in 1993 to Marconi and in 1995 to the Melbourne Knights.

As well as three League Championships, Matic won three NSL Cup Finals, two with Adelaide, ('89 and '92) and his third with the now defunct Collingwood in 1997.

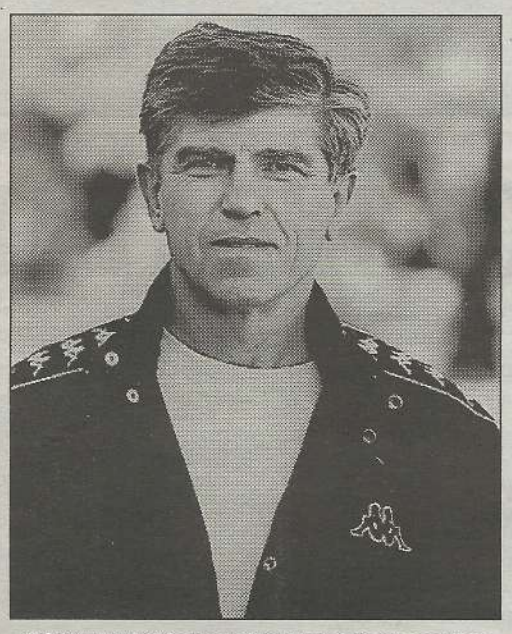
Unquestionably, an illustrious coaching career.

To Zoran, from all at *ABSW*, have a Happy Birthday and many of them to come.

●●●●

GUESS who's coming back into action for Marconi?

None other than Chad ('Mandala') Gibson, that's who.



ZORAN MATIC: Happy Birthday for tomorrow.

The steely midfielder-cum-defender was loaned out by Marconi last year to Norwegian First Division side, Bodo/Glimt F.C.

The long-range goalscorer played nine matches under the coach that signed him.

However unfortunately for Gibson, that same coach was recently sacked.

The new coach that took over would not fit Gibson into his first team squad.

Undeterred the 25 year old Aussie went straight to the Club's management and arranged for his release.

As soon as he left Europe, Chad flew to England seeking the possibility of finding himslef a new club.

Gibson was granted a three week trial with Swindon Town before returning to Sydney.

Marconi's coach Lee Sterrey, upon hearing of the news of Gibson's return, stated last night:

"Are we glad to have him back.

"He's just what I need at the moment.

"He'll greatly stiffen our midfield.

"Chad's the type of flexible player that you can slot him almost anywhere."

●●●●

CHAD GIBSON: Returning in action for Marconi.

By John Leonomos

WANTED URGENTLY

Soccer Australia is urgently trying to track down former Marconi international midfielder, Gary Byrnes.

Gary played with Marconi as well as for Australia in the 80s.

Mr George Dick from Soccer Australia has requested the assistance from 'Good Oil' that he would urgently like to hear from Gary, or anyone of his many friends, as to his whereabouts.

So please, to any reader out there who knows where Gary Byrnes is these days, would they get in touch with Mr George Dick at Soccer Australia.

The matter is rather urgent.

Mr Dick can be contacted at Soccer Australia on (02) 8251 1016.

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JACK GERBEC is only two years old, but despite his tender years, already he has a mind of his own.

In Australia, Master Jack follows his beloved Marconi.

Overseas though, Manchester United is unquestionably his choice team, despite United's hiccups this season.

Little Jack is not ashamed to admit he's a huge David Beckham fan.

Yesterday afternoon at a small pre Christmas party, Jack received a Marconi ball as a present.

When 'Good Oil' approached him as to what he thought of his latest present, little Jack was far from impressed.

He quipped back to '*Good Oil*':

"Some guy has made a monumental mistake.

"Sure I follow Marconi, but this ball is a full Size 5.

"What they haven't contemplated at all it appears, is the fact that I'm still just a little bloke.

"A Size 3 would be far more appropriate for me.

"Wouldn't you agree?" questioned Jack.

"I'm not impressed," the little left-footer ended.

●●●●

Master JACK GERBEC of Croydon, NSW, seen here looking somewhat despondent. Our cameraman caught Jack yesterday, reluctantly clutching his Size 5 Soccer ball.

THE LEICHHARDT TIGERS in the NSW Premier League, has just structured its first Women's Team.

The Club will be holding its first ever-trials from the middle of next month.

All girls expressing a strong desire to take up playing competitive Soccer, should contact the Club on 02-9560 5414 during business hours.

Enquiries after hours may be made on 0402 306 666.

The position for a suitably qualified Women's Team Co-ordinator/Convenor is also now available.

Further information to all interested parties is available at the above contact numbers.

●●●●

THE ever so delightful Ms Liz Terry from the Marconi Soccer Office, is about to part company from the 'Palace'.

Having recently graduated in Marketing and Sports Management, the forever smiling Liz will finish up with Soccer following Marconi's home game against South Melbourne, this Saturday 5th January.

Liz will then take off for a couple of weeks holiday in Adelaide before going on a four month working holiday up in the sunny state of Queensland.

Best wishes to you Liz and thanks for your always wonderful and pleasant service you've always given to the Soccer media.

LIZ TERRY (right), Soon to leave Soccer for a new career in Marketing. Seen here with her close Marconi working colleague and friend, Ms Gabriella Genovese.

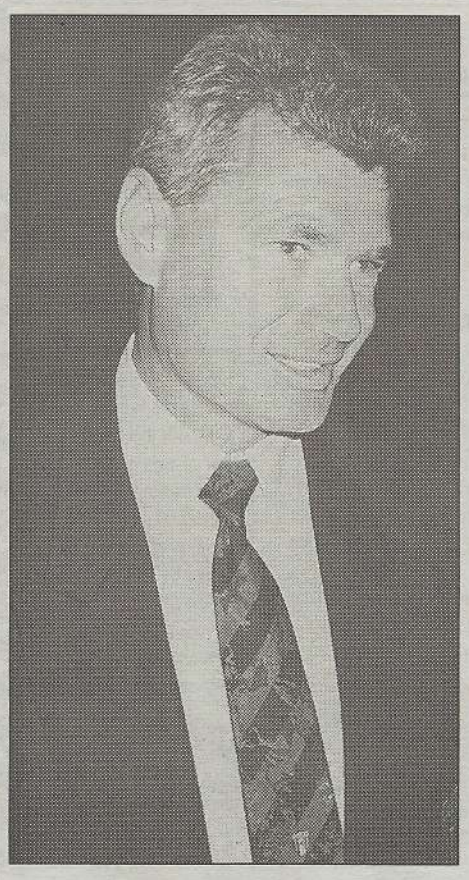
'GOOD OIL' would like to take this opportunity to wish all its readers a nice Christmas tomorrow.

But far more importantly, we wish everyone to have a Healthy and very Safe New Year.

Please drive very carefully over the Holiday break and see you all 'next year'.

SOCCER WOMAN BY JANENE

AUSTRALIA CUP - BE THERE!



Matilda's head coach Adrian Santrac.

The Christmas and New Year holiday period also means it's Australia Cup time, and the fourth edition of the event sees the Matildas doing battle with South Korea in the regional centres of Wagga Wagga, Albury, and Bendigo, commencing 13 January.

Twelve months since their last international hitout, the Matildas are itching to kick off what will in contrast be a busy international year, culminating with the all-important Oceania World Cup Qualifiers in November.

The Australia Cup will of course also mark new National Coach Adrian Santrac's first assignment since his appointment a month ago.

Santrac led The Matildas to victory in the 3rd Australia Cup as Interim Coach, undefeated in the three matches against France, and says he intends to retain the trophy.

South Korea have just returned from the Asian Championships where they narrowly lost their semi-final to Japan.

There is also the opportunity to check out the Young Matildas who will be in camp and playing three matches, commencing 11 January in Cootamundra.

The last time National Youth Mike Mulvey will have his charges in before the Oceania Qualifiers for the inaugural FIFA U19 Women's World Championship, there is much at stake.

Fixtures

Fri 11 January 2002	Fisher Park, Cootamundra
6.00pm	Young Matildas v Canberra Eclipse
Sun 13 January 2002	Robertson Oval, Wagga Wagga
3.30pm	Young Matildas v NSW Select
6.00pm	THE MATILDAS v SOUTH KOREA
Wed 16 January 2002	Lavington Sports Centre, Albury
4.30pm	Young Matildas v Victoria Vision
7.00pm	THE MATILDAS v SOUTH KOREA
Sat 19 January 2002	Tom Flood Sports Centre, Bendigo
7.00pm	THE MATILDAS v SOUTH KOREA

Tickets

Australia Cup tickets will be only available on match day at the venue -

Adults $6
Concessions $4
Family (2 adults/2 conc) $15
Children 16yrs and under FREE.

HAMM VOTED WORLD PLAYER OF THE YEAR

USA striker Mia Hamm has been voted FIFA Women's World Player of the Year, taking out the award in its inaugural year.

Hamm, the most famous name worldwide in women's soccer, was a clear winner with 154 points.

Sun Wen of China polled 79 points, with American Tiffeny Milbrett third on 47.

Seventy-two national women's coaches cast their votes.

29-year-old Hamm proved the main spectators' drawcard in this year's inaugural season of the WUSA professional league, playing for Washington Freedom.

Hamm capped her year with a thrilling two-goal performance in the USA's 4-1 victory over Germany in the US Women's Cup.

Hamm remains the highest international goalscorer of any player in the world, male or female, with the amazing tally of 129.

The award was made at the FIFA World Player Gala in Zurich, Switzerland last Monday.

It's a fantastic step forward that FIFA has introduced this award, but unfortunately it perhaps came about in the wrong year.

Post-Olympics, 2001 has been a comparatively quiet year on the international front.

The inaugural season of the WUSA professional league added to this, USA's national team barely getting on the park.

Essentially, only the Europeans have kept a regular stream of internationals, with the staging of their UEFA Championship and World Cup Qualifier fixtures.

The modest Hamm was probably a little embarrassed to receive the award. As great a player as she has been for many years, Hamm has not enjoyed the greatest of years this year.

Her pro league performances only earned her selection in the WUSA Second Team.

Likewise, Sun Wen has barely played a full game this year, hampered by injury.

Unlike men's football, the women's game isn't constantly beamed around the world on television and it's therefore much harder for the smaller women's nations to keep up with who's in form. Many votes seem to therefore be based on reputation rather than the year's performances.

Perhaps a more deserving recipient for 2001 was someone like German midfielder Marin Meinert, who performed admirably in the WUSA and was named in the WUSA First Team, as well as helped lead Germany to the European Championship crown and an undefeated World Cup Qualifiers campaign to date.

Mia Hamm - Captaining the United States of America during the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

Mia Hamm

KOREA ON THE UP

South Korea has long stood in the shadows of Asian and world powers China, Japan, and more recently North Korea, all of whom have competed in at least one FIFA Women's World Cup and/or Olympic Games.

South Korea has set itself an aim of changing that - of joining the elite international ranks and qualifying for the major events.

Their progress was rewarded less than a fortnight ago when they finished fourth in the 14-nation Asian Championship, after only narrowing losing to Japan 2-1 in the semifinal.

Along the way to producing their best placing since 1995, they defeated hosts and 1999 runners-up Chinese Taipei to top Group A, the first time they had beaten the Taiwanese in eleven years.

Korea's relatively young team, most aged in their early 20s, earlier this year recorded their first ever tournament win.

South Korea were undefeated in their home event, the Toto Women's Cup, beating China and Brazil, and drawing against Japan.

Although the three opposing world superpowers fielded mainly youth players, the results were still very encouraging.

In 1999 and 2000, South Korea competed in the prestigious US Women's Cup, gaining valuable international experience against world champions USA, world number three Brazil, World Cup nations Canada and Mexico, plus Finland.

They also twice played World Cup silver medallists China during that same period.

This Australia Cup will be the Korean senior national team's first visit to Australia, and The Matildas have only twice before played South Korea.

In the 1996 Tri-Series in New Zealand, The Matildas were victorious 1-0, and four days later, Korea posted the 2-1 win.

David Mitchell ends Parramatta romance

Parramatta Power Head Coach, David Mitchell, announced last week that he and Assistant Coach Lawrie McKinna would not be seeking an extension to their existing three-year contract term, which concludes in June 2002.

David Mitchell said; "Lawrie and myself have enjoyed the challenge of establishing a new Club. The past three years have been a valuable experience and we are determined to achieve success by making the Final Six for this year's competition. It has been a privilege to be involved in such an exciting project and an honour to have worked with people of Denis Fitzgerald's calibre. We have made the decision now so that we have time to fully pursue new challenges and it also enables the Power Board the time to seek and appoint suitable replacement coaches well in advance of preparations commencing for the 2002/2003 NSL Competition."

David Mitchell: " ... time to pursue new challenges."

Parramatta Power Deputy Chairman, Denis Fitzgerald said:

"David and Lawrie have done a tremendous job establishing a full-time, professional soccer club. We are grateful for their input in the formation of the Club and we wish them well in the future. David and Lawrie are extremely keen to ensure that the Power make the final six in the current season of the NSL Competition. David and Lawrie will continue discussions with clubs in China trying to arrange end-of-season friendlies with Chinese clubs and further the Power's growing association with leading provincial teams in mainland China."

FIFA award thrills Soccer Australia

Soccer Australia last week hailed FIFA's announcement that Australia has been named Runner-Up "Mover of the Year" for 2001.

The recognition of the Socceroos extended to the "Team of the Year", Australia ranking fourth, one ahead of its World Cup Qualification opponent, Uruguay. While Costa Rica topped the most improved list, Soccer Australia Chairman Ian Knop was delighted with the results.

"The Board of Soccer Australia is delighted with the recognition from the world governing body, of Australia's capabilities as a young footballing nation," Mr Knop said.

"This is an outstanding result for Frank Farina, and clearly demonstrates the progress and development of the Socceroos under his guidance.

"The Board of Soccer Australia is delighted with this, and sees it as establishing an excellent platform to go forward and improve in the next four years," he said.

Frank Farina, who was appointed national coach in November 1999, has taken the Socceroos in the past year alone, up 22 places in the FIFA Rankings to 50th.

"Obviously it is very pleasing that we have received this recognition from FIFA, although I would gladly swap that for World Cup qualification," Farina said.

"Nonetheless, this shows just how well Australia and in particular the Socceroos, are progressing and moving ahead."

"Pana" marks double century with engagement plans

By Bert van Bedaf

At 169 centimetres, Steve Panapoulos is probably one of the smaller players in the National Soccer League, but that hasn't stopped him clocking up a double century of matches for South Melbourne. Panopoulos played his 200th game against Brisbane Strikers last Sunday week.

As far as the feet go, they're sure and swift - and although he's had to fill some large boots when appointed captain a few weeks ago, after South icon Paul Trimboli was sidelined for three months because of injury, he's been starring in the centre, dominating midfield.

"Pana", as he's called at South is the midfield engine, the corner taker, the man with the lethal cross or through-pass, the tireless worker around the ground and always an on-field inspiration.

Uncapped for Australia and not desperately seeking an overseas club, Panopoulos, at 26, has proved himself a loyal clubman and stalwart for the Lakesiders.

There have been major successes along the way. He captained South's 1993/94 youth team to a national premiership. He won back-to-back NSL championships with the seniors in 1997/98 and 1998/99. He won the Oceania championship and in January 2000 travelled with South to Brazil to take part in the inaugural (and so far only) world championship for clubs in Rio de Janeiro.

Although last year South probably had its best squad ever and won the minor premiership, the Lakesiders lost the grand final to Wollongong.

"Last year's side was very good. It probably was the best side technically I've played in," Panopoulos reflected on the title that slipped away.

Steve Panapoulos: "We need to nurture younger players."

This year, his on-field leadership has taken on an even greater significance since South Melbourne is undergoing a rebuilding phase under coach Eddie Krncevic.

"A lot of those (senior) players from last year have gone and we need to nurture the younger players," Panopoulos said.

South hasn't fired too well this season and is hovering around tenth spot on the NSL ladder, gradually getting over injuries and blooding young talent.

"We haven't been playing the best so far this season, but people are writing us off too soon. No other team has destroyed us (when South lost, it has been by one-goal margins) and the squad is still developing," Panopoulos said.

"I'm sure we'll come good in the second half of the season and we could be finishing in or near the top six," he said.

Acclimatising to national league soccer as a youngster is something Panopoulos knows too well. He made his debut in 1993 as an 18-year-old. "It was a huge step up from playing at youth level," Panopoulos recalled. "And because I was short and light, I realised I needed to build myself up."

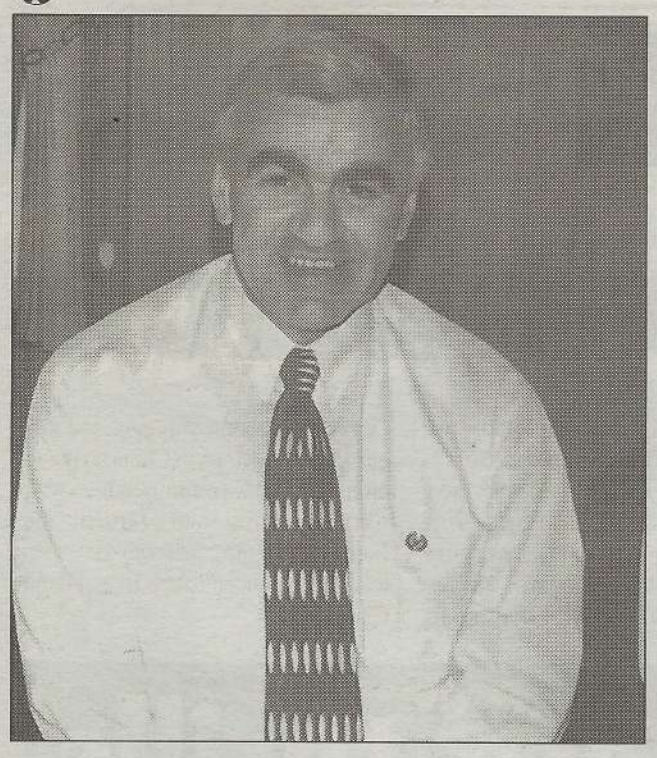
The midfielder started with the Oakleigh Soccer Club and moved to the Victorian Institute of Sport before joining South Melbourne, where his cousin Steve Tasios already had been playing.

Panopoulos and his family always have been staunch South Melbourne supporters and he could not conceive of playing elsewhere.

"My dad still is a big fan of South. I used to watch my cousin play and I'm rapt to be playing my 200th game for South," Panopoulos said.

On Sunday, someone special to him was proudly watching from the grandstand. When in Brazil for the world tournament, Panopoulos met and courted a young local woman, Andrea Ciminelli, who worked in the hotel where the South players were staying. After a long-distance romance and long flights to and back from Brazil, Panopoulos and Andrea got engaged.

They are getting married in Melbourne next month.



Basil Scarsella: Losing the Oceania plot?

Letters to the Editor

SA board has lost credibility

Dear Sir,

The squabble over Frank Farina's appointment and strategy to replace him signals the on-going divisions that are still occurring at the Soccer Australia Board.

It is now clear that the game's administration is in an absolute mess, when it can't decide what to do with a situation they allegedly had a plan for. Forget Mr Knop's "plan B" – this current Board has "plan C" (confusion).

I shudder to think what the Community is thinking of our great sport. This can only be very stressful to the thousands of volunteers and workers at the grass roots level.

It is very clear that the meeting of the State Presidents in Sydney last weekend could produce only one outcome.

Ian Knop: Soccer Australia boss.

The Soccer Australia Board must be directed to resign en masse, and the State Presidents take executive control of Soccer Australia for at least the next 12 months so they can regain direction.

It is time to put the game back in the hands of the owners!!

L. Davey
CHELTENHAM, SA.

Scarsella's own goal

Dear Sir,

A recent discussion on SBS 'On the Ball' highlights again who are the thinkers and doers and who are the dreamers in the world of Australian soccer. Full marks to Johnny Warren for tidying up some reality behind the Socceroos' loss in Montevideo.

The statistical facts (such as who scored in how many games) points to the need of a different approach to team selection in order to form a side with the best chance to score.

After all the game is won by goals scored. Tactics that include different counterplay for different opponents are also important, but most of all meaningful lead-up games to toughen and shape the team.

This is where Mr Scarsella lost the plot completely. If an Oceania winner goes to the World cup what if the single representative country is called New Zealand (this has happened before) or even Fiji? The odds look much better to play in a group with first and second qualifying or more (as in South America). And let's get real. What result will Australia come home with after winning Oceania ?

Congratulations to Nick Tana - a tough man to deal with but with a clear vision.

He questioned the shaky ground the National Soccer League is standing on many years ago. Did Mr Scarsella's tenure at the top of SA improve that situation? Let's forget about Plan B; abandon the shaky ground; go to a new structure and build on a solid foundation with teams that have cross-sectional support (ex-Perth, Newcastle, Northern Spirit)

Perhaps the only way Australia will get to participate in a World Cup is to stage one here.

Peter K Tamm
Dernancourt, SA

Hometruths from our World Cup debacle

Dear Editor,

The game against France was officially used to prepare us to the games against Uruguay.

What did we learn from the game against France? We learnt that Kewell should play on the left and that Viduka was irrelevant in the national team's colours. The board of Soccer Australia should have sacked the coaching staff after the first leg against Uruguay.

Failing to have done so, Soccer Australia should apologise to the public for keeping that incompetent coaching staff for the away leg.

Furthermore, qualification for the World Cup would have contributed nothing to the code. The money would have disappeared overnight and the glory with the first round games.

Aussie Rules does alright without playing a single international.

Kids are queuing up to play basketball while no one cares about who the Boomers are. Israel has been to the World Cup only once yet the code is as strong as it has always been.

Me? I learn from friendly games. Me? I would play the Socceroos regular internationals in Europe. Me? I would make the code apply to mainstream Australia.

How to make it apply to mainstream Australia? I said it before -

1) ban kissing; 2) ignore players who roll on the ground with pain - let them crawl to the sideline if they are conscious.

It is astonishing that goalkeepers, for whom the game should be definitely stopped when injured, hardly ever fake an injury. But in the eyes of the Australian public, soccer fieldplayers are a bunch of school girls, and it is a disadvantage from marketing point of view.

Eugene Orwell,
MACHANS BEACH, QLD.

Australia needs FIFA help

Dear Sir,

All this talk about why the Socceroos failed to qualify for the World Cup, the coach, the players, the tactics etc. is all rubbish Oceania is under the most pressure and has the hardest qualification process of all the Confederations.

The injustice imposed by FIFA requires an almost 100% success rate. The other confederations only have to accumulate enough pouts to qualify. A minimum of 55% of the maximum points available in CONCACAF and the South American group will see any team through. In the UEFA group 65% can get a team a runners up spot and a second chance to qualify. Have an off day, a big player injured, lose games here and there, no problems. There is always the next game Oceania has no such luxury.

Games against Samoa and Uruguay are of equal importance. Every game must be a winner. (The stroll through the Pacific nations, the joy across New Zealand and the home and away to the fifth-best South American team. How many of the 32 teams that qualified for the World Cup would have made it. The chances are much better in their own set ups. The odds are much better. FIFA has robbed Oceania of a decent chance of representation. Every 4 years our hopes are raised. Soccer Australia gets deeper into debt, then come the accusations and recriminations and it's all because of one game.

P. Walsh
Double Bay, NSW.

FARINA SHOULD QUIT

Dear Sir,

On 27/3/01, I wrote in the ABSW I quote " ... it won't just happen out of thin air or because we have Viduka & company ...". And it did not happened.

Sorry! And I wrote " ... then he better look out or else he might end up on the Cross!" Well ... well and Mr Farina you did end up on the Cross."

As the forty days are over; as it is your ascension, but we know that you can not levitate upward, so to redeem yourself in a gentlemanly way please just step down! Tell your boss, that in the best interest of Australian Soccer, it is time that you go! That you tried it, but are not good enough! There is not shame in it. It is not your fault, that we are not successful; the fish stinks from its head! When you go, do take all the Jokers with you, who call themselves Soccer leaders!

If you stay as coach; what would you do, ti alter the situation? Even if we may qualify direct? You would repeat yourself, I believe:

1. The team against Uruguay, were not "goal hungry" at all, because you did not trained them! You did not know how. If you knew then why did not dot it. We were struggling to build a goal;

2. The last 270 minutes of play, we were not capable to put away a goal. I mean a constructed goal with two-three passes. I am not asking that we walk the ball into the goal as the French did. But at least with one miserable pass, starting from our half ... poor favour.

3. From before the Scotland game, to end of Japan tournament, seemingly you built a team, which started to show results. Why did not stuck with to that winning team? What was your logical reasoning to modify a clicking team as Popovic, Zdrilic, Fox, etc with the not clicking team as Viduka, Kewell, Murphy etc? What did they contribute to your up and coming team? Noting! After their first 90 minutes of negative play (showing) why did you not keep them on the reserve bench, for the 2nd and 3rd games?

Who was our playmaker? The one with soccer brain. Or have any idea what moral damage you did to the discarded players confidence?

In the future gain, you will take your imagination for the reality and you'll forget that our target was qualification only. In Australian we are the nursery of talented players from overseas, with people coming here to get them.

Robert Marton,
MANLY, QLD.

Dandenong's Samson the Great

Dear Sir

I am writing about a Soccer Coach in Victoria who loves his job. He is one of the meanest and best coaches I have ever seen in my life. He goes by the name of Samson Elmazi.

Conducts training sessions in the mornings, afternoons. When he trains people he trains them hard and tough. He currently is coaching in the Victoria State League Division one at the Dandenong Thunder Soccer Club. He was there last year; took over from about half way and was unlucky to get relegated on 27 points which was the closest the Premier League had been in its history. This year is his second year of coaching and I see him coaching one day in the big leagues of Australian Soccer. He knows the game very well and puts tactics into action on game day.

In the new season, the boys from the Thunder will be in tip-top shape as Elmazi will be taking them on a long pre-season. First training session 5km runs which the boys did in the morning at 7am and in the afternoon. He's got some surprises in store for the boys like taking them to the army reserve and all.

When you see Elmazi on the pitch on match day he looks like he is the coach of Inter Milan. He dresses with slick pants and slick jacket. Goes to the barber before a game and gets a shave and hair cut, with a cigar when watching a game. When he gets upset he tends to kick the little Eskie that we got on our bench. He has done the imposible by putting a subsitute on during a game and taking him off in five minutes. They give him the nickname Rolex because at training every one works like a Rolex watch ticking over and over. If any one talks they do laps.

Samson Elmazi

I can see Elmazi one day coaching the Socceroos, and I will be his assistant, or team manager. Elmazi will have his Cigar and a VB on the other side. Playing against Uruguay to get into the World Cup.

Ciao...
Burim Sulemani,
DANDENONG, VIC.

Following the English lead

Dear Sir,

England have realised any cowboy can round up cattle in the paddock, but it takes a special qualified and experienced coach to unify talented players from different Clubs and playing methods into a well organised and efficient team.

We doubt they would have two strikers as their coaching staff. Horses for causes.

J. P. Janssen,
MARYBOROUGH, QLD.

Off The Crossbar

By Allan Crisp

DON'T WRITE US OFF WARNS FORCE SKIPPER

Adelaide City captain Carl Veart delivered the Yuletide message the loyal supporters of the club wanted to hear when he declared the Force is not yet out of the championship race.

"It's never too late," Veart said. "Even though we had a lot stronger squad and a lot better side two years ago we were struggling like we are now, yet we eventually got through to the finals.

"If we give up now we might as well stop, but we won't do that. "Instead, we'll keep working hard and believe in ourselves so we can get there."

Adelaide City is now entering a two-week break from competition following last Friday night's home game against the Football Kingz and Veart believes that this period will be of immense benefit to the team.

"We can use the time taking stock and be able to work on a few things we haven't been doing in the games so we can come back with fresh ideas after the break."

Veart admitted that confidence within the City camp had slumped in recent weeks and that the team had not produced the football of which it is capable.

"I suppose confidence has been down a bit, but we have to be positive and start combining as we know we can."

Veart has shown the dedication and courage required by a captain this season by soldiering through the last five games with a broken toe.

Whyalla-born Veart expanded his career playing in England for Sheffield United, Crystal Palace and Millwall and has represented Australia 18 times.

This season, Veart and fellow Socceroo Aurelio Vidmar have provided the experience for the Force, along with ex-Melbourne Knights captain Ante Kovacevic, former Carlton striker Alex Moreira, midfielder Nick Sabljak and goalkeeper Adrian Cagalj.

With the departure of Polish professional Grzegorz Lewandowski and Yugoslav defender Petar Cestic, Adelaide City has lost a large slice of its experience.

However, the good news is that Vidmar, Veart, former Melbourne Knights captain, Ante Kovacevic, ex-Carlton striker Alex Moreira, midfielder Nick Sabljak and goalkeeper Adrian Cagalj have all played 60 or more NSL matches.

Add the injured David Terminello to that list of tried and true performers and it becomes clear that the Force is not lacking in tough campaigners.

The return of ace defender or midfielder Matthew Kemp after a brief stint with Italian club Spal has been a huge bonus that has helped to offset the loss of Kosta Salapasidis to Greek club Kallithea; Brad Hassell to Perth Glory, and the release of Italian trio, Claudio Pelosi, Gianluca Lagati and Fabrizio Bucciarelli.

Kiwi international Jeff Campbell was expected to play an important role this season, but the young left sided player has been restricted to just one appearance off the bench as he battles a long term groin injury.

Through necessity, heavy reliance has been placed on the young shoulders of City rookies, Ivan Karlovic (23 games), Kristian Rees (22 games), Iain Fyfe (13 games), Mario Karlovic (6 games) and Aaron Goulding (5 games).

Joey and Socceroo Youth squad member, Louis Brain, 19, who is seeking a transfer, has notched up 57 NSL appearances.

His discontent stems from his perception of not having been granted sufficient starting berths, but he continues to be included in the City squads until he settles with another club.

Meanwhile, flame haired Veart speaks with authority about revivals, having been an integral member of the City side which gave its faithful supporter base a hectic roller coaster ride before winning the 1992 NSL championship.

City left no doubt about its class by racing through the first 12 matches of that campaign unconquered, but then proceeded to invoke suicidal tendencies by losing its next eight games.

Adelaide Force skipper, Carl Veart: "We'll keep working hard.

On the evidence of that dreadful form lapse, City had no right to believe it could reach the top five, yet alone take out the title.

But, a return to the tried and true formula, involving hard work, dedication, repetitive team drills, motivation and a mutual respect between the coaching and playing staff, propelled City to finals wins over Wollongong Wolves, Sydney Olympic, South Melbourne and Melbourne Croatia.

The Force added that 1992 grand final success to the 1986 title won in the year Zoran Matic took over the coaching mantle and the club achieved its third championship crown in 1994.

Similarly to 1992, the current season has been a traumatic yo-yo ride for the South Australian club.

The true believers remain firm that last season's campaign, when City failed to qualify for the finals for the first time in 12-seasons, will not be repeated this time.

Despite City's lowly position on the league ladder, captain Veart refuses to wave the white flag of surrender.

A miraculous form revival is possible, but what is urgently needed to achieve the turnaround is the return of the passionate crowd support that inspired Adelaide City to past glories.

How can the proud club revive flagging interest? ABSW journo Richard Kreider raised that subject with Zoran Matic for the Perth Glory match day program of round 11.

"Why has Adelaide soccer lost its attraction?" was the question posed.

Matic replied, "The only thing that will bring the supporters back is the results.

"People have been spoilt in Adelaide. A team that plays attractive football will always generate supporters.

"I think there is still room for a second team in Adelaide and I have always encouraged this because I think rivalry is healthy in our sport."

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

While traditionalists have grizzled, the move by the West Torrens Birkalla club in adopting a new name – Adelaide Galaxy – has been generally greeted as an acceptable modern trendy title

"Galaxy" is certainly a lofty tag, even more grand when the definition is gleaned from the dictionary.

"The Milky Way, the long white luminous track, which seems to encompass the heavens like a girdle, occasioned by a multitude of stars, at so vast a distance as to be distinguishable apart only by the most powerful lenses.

Or, "Galaxy – An assemblage of splendid, illustrious or beautiful persons."

While on the subject of stars, Adelaide Galaxy has signed former Eastern Pride defender Johnathon Buhagia and is negotiating with potential acquisitions, Naoki Imaya from Blacktown City Demons and John Kyriazopoulos from Bonnyrigg White Eagles.

Galaxy coaches Milan Ivanovic and Phil Scardigno are hoping to secure the NSW pair by the time the Premier League season kick-off.

A closing thought on the subject, could "Galaxy" have been chosen because owner Con Makris keeps reaching into his "Sky Rocket?"

CROYDON CRUSADERS

Great to see that former Croydon Kings players have accepted leading roles in other capacities with the Croydon Park club.

Ernie Loungo has been appointed senior coach of the State League club, which will be aiming for an immediate return to the Premier League.

Frank Timar is the new manager of soccer operations, with Mark Kosmina, younger brother of former Socceroo captain John Kosmina, taking over the role of team manager.

Allan Crisp, John Perin and Peter Millar can be heard on the 5RPH (1197AM) Marshall Thompson Homes/Pacific Real Estate Breakfast Soccer Show each Tuesday from 7am-9am (Excluding Christmas Day).

Former Australian international Perin and Crisp are joined by Blue Eagles goalscoring champion Michael Brooks to present the 5RPH SOS (Soccer On Sunday) program each Sabbath from 8.30am-9.30am.

Interviews provide the meat in the soccer sandwich for both programs with listener participation on Tuesdays welcomed.

The local number to ring is 8231.1197. Interstate callers should dial (08) 8231.1197.

Allan Crisp can be heard on the 5RPH (1197) AM Marshall Thompson Homes/Pacific Real Estate Breakfast Soccer Show each Tuesday, along with former Australian international and Adelaide City coach John Perin and Peter Millar.

Perin and Crisp return on Sundays for the 5RPH SOS (Soccer on Sunday) program from 8.30am-9.30am to present the latest news, interviews and scores from home and abroad.

Referee shortage hits Soccer Canberra

By Graham Cooke

Canberra soccer is becoming a victim of its own success with an explosion of new senior teams not being matched by a corresponding rise in the number of referees to take charge of the extra matches.

The chairman of Soccer Referees Canberra, Chris Conti, warns that unless between 30 and 40 men and women offer themselves for training in the next few weeks "there is going to be a lot of pain" in the lower divisions of the ACT State League next season.

"The bottleneck is definitely with the State League on Saturday afternoons," he said. "There will be more games than ever next season, and that is just at the time when some of our younger referees choose to play.

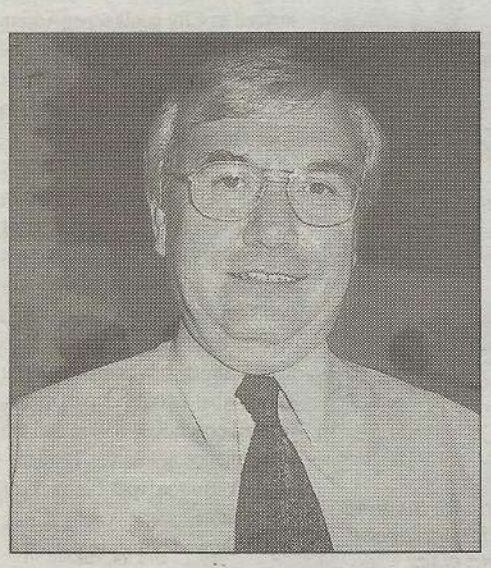
"I do not see a problem with the ACT Premiership on Sundays."

Conti said the problem was not that the referees' body was losing members. "People drift in and out, but in recent times we have had a number of top referees return to the game, including Frank Exposito and John Jenkins," he said.

"We have about 60 senior members and our numbers are rising, it is just that they aren't rising fast enough."

He is urging all State League clubs to persuade two people from their ranks to go through a training course before the beginning of the season.

"If I was a young State League soccer player I would look at it very seriously," he said. "It is often the case that individuals who will never go beyond local level as players can get to the very top of the game as referees.



Steve Doszpot: Soccer Canberra president.

"You have the case of Ben Wilson from the ACT who was an assistant for the Socceroos v France game, and we are hoping Ben Williams will be accepted as a referee in the NSL and Gavin Martin and Phil Grabham as assistants."

Among females Michelle Treloar and Jenny Quinn were involved as referees in the Women's National League while Sarah-Jane Bradford had made the assistants' panel at the age of 15.

"There is a definite shortage of good female referees nationally," he said. "I would suggest that if any young woman came along who has the potential, we could train her to national league level within two years."

Further information can be obtained by contacting Conti on 0417 206 510.

National Soccer League

South Melbourne 1
Wollongong Wolves 3

By Bert Van Bedaf

South Melbourne's season plunged further into the mire, while Wollongong's received a lift after the Wolves came from behind to beat South 3-1 at Bob Jane stadium last Friday night.

The win lifted the Wolves off the bottom of the table after a strong second-half display.

This was the replay of last season's grand final, but the reigning champion looked a shadow of its former self before launching its spirited fightback after the break, while South Melbourne's young brigade shone like a bright flame for the first 20 minutes and then quickly faded.

South claimed the lead after nine minutes with a well-worked goal, but three second-half goals got Wollongong only its second win of the season.

Wollongong coach Ron Corry put his faith in young strikers Greg Sharland and Naum Sekulovski in an attempt to find the winning combination and was not disapointed. In his debut game, Sharland showed all the attributes," Corry said.

The Wolves coach recognised the importance of the win. "We needed a result. But we have to go on from here next week," he said.

South coach Eddie Krncevic looked and sounded disappointed as the season is slipping away for South. "It was the same old story. We had good chances and we missed them," he said.

He savaged his team for their lack of effort and showing fight for only 20 minutes.

"We were terrible in the second half and credit to Wollongong. I don't mind going down but not in this manner. Lack of effort really disappoints me," Krncevic said.

A monkey fell off Peter Buljan's back when the game was only nine minutes old. Mehmet Durakovic took the ball into Wolves territory and cut through to Joe Bacak, who set-up Buljan with a quick through-pass.

An important signing preseason, the struggling striker has been missing out several times in front of goal, but he gave himself an early Christmas present, finding his touch and the net for his first goal for South.

The home team made a blistering start with Nick Tolios heading wide a Steve Panopoulos free-kick and Robert Liparoti twice heading a Fausto De Amicis corner into Wolves 'keeper Dean Anastasiadis.

Wolves' impressive midfielder, Paul Reid (left) holds off South Melbourne's Massimo Murdocca.

Wollongong came close in the 21st minute, when Sharland had only the 'keeper to beat. But Michael Petkovic stood his ground and parried the Wolves' shot.

Buljan could have doubled the lead three minutes later, but experienced defender David Cervinski put in a strong challenge and the South striker stranded on Anastasiadis, who kept his team to only a goal down at half time.

The Wolves got back on equal terms ten minutes into the second half, when Liparoti failed to clear. Con Anthopoulos provided the cross that Liparoti did not intercept. It fell just right for Alex Castro, who struck the equaliser with a right foot shot that came off the inside of the far post before it hit the net. Wollongong drew strength from their goal and created several chances.

The South defence fell apart, giving the Wolves a clear path on goal and forcing Petkovic into several vital saves.

But the dam broke eventually. Dino Mennillo put the Wolves on top with a right-foot shot from 20 metres that flew high into the far corner. Paul Reid sealed victory for the Wolves with a lobbed shot over Petkovic in injury time.

Adelaide City Force 3
Football Kingz 0

By Allan Crisp

Adelaide City Force triumphed over late prematch adversities and an unimpressive Football Kingz to break a five-game winless drought and complete a vital victory that hauled it back into play-off calculations.

Frantic Force officials twice had to change the team sheet, firstly striking Matthew Kemp's name off the starting line-up after the flank defender suffered stomach pains during the warm up.

Kemp was replaced in the run-on team by Mario Karlovic and shortly after that hurried change, defender Ivan Karlovic reported a rib cage problem that saw him drop off the list of substitutes.

Into the breach stepped youngsters Nick Budin and Adrian Pelegrino, both of whom were called off the bench seven minutes from the final whistle.

The disruptions failed to dim the Adelaide City resolve as it began in positive style to sow the seeds of its second home based full pointer of the season.

Alex Moreira and Louis Brain, who were dropped from the starting line-up against Perth Glory, staged significant returns with 19-year old Brain collecting the first City goal, while elegant Moreira was acclaimed man-of-the-match.

Hard working, inventive striker, Scott Tunbridge enjoyed a night to remember, scoring a great brace that brought his season tally to six goals from 12-games.

Brain and Tunbridge fired home a two-goal barrage during an inspired four- minute burst, but City's reputation for allowing leads to evaporate meant that few fans were confident that three home points were housed in Santa's sack of surprises.

Scott Tunbridge: Inspired Adelaide with a goal and strong play.

City more than deserved their half time advantage, but the telling statistic that the Kingz had scored 15 of their 17 goals this season during second half performances, brought added apprehension.

The second Tunbridge goal dispelled doubts as Ante Kovacevic and his youthful apprentice defenders denied all of the 23 Kiwi sorties into the Force penalty box.

Moreira was the architect of the first City goal as he controlled the ball superbly to release Brain, who tore into the box to drive past Michael Theoklitos in the Kingz goal.

Goal number two was a copybook effort as Tunbridge headed to Kovacevic, whose return cross was nodded powerfully home by the young striker.

The second half clincher arrived as City goalkeeper Adrian Cagalj cleared upfield for the bounce to deceive Hiroshi Miyazawa, allowing Tunbridge to chip Theoklitos.

Earlier Theoklitos brilliantly prevented a stinging drive from Tunbridge and the goalkeeper was equally effective in tipping a bulleting shot from Adelaide captain Carl Veart.

The Kiwis managed just two direct shots on goal during a match that would have disappointed coach Ken Fallon and the TV audience across the Tasman.

Mark Burton was the pick of the visitors, while young Craig Wylie showed immense potential.

Northern Spirit 3
Melbourne Knights 5

By Arvind Hickman

The Melbourne Knights scored an impressive yet costly 5-3 victory over Northern Spirit at North Sydney Oval last Friday night.

The Knights will be fined for embarrassingly bringing the wrong strip to North Sydney, and thus delaying the game for half an hour.

Their all white away strip clashes with Northern Spirits home jersey, breaking NSL regulations. Andrew Marth's chargers eventually fashioned unfamiliar blue shirts, an omen of what was to come as Spirit yet again had the 'blues' in defence despite fighting back twice.

Joel Porter ensured that any mistakes were sorely punished by scoring a ruthless first half hat-trick to keep his side in front at all times.

The first goal came in the 15th minute when Ivo De Jesus whipped over a dangerous flat cross from the left, which Porter clinically volleyed home.

Only ten minutes later Spirit equalised with a well worked corner and explosive finish from former Knights boy Adrian Cervinski. Foster played a deep cross to the back post that was headed across goal by Julian Watts, and then acrobatically volleyed into the net by Cervinski with an overhead kick.

In the 33rd minute Porter calmly slotted the Knights back into the lead after latching onto a long ball and beating the keeper one-on-one after Watts slipped at a crucial moment.

The Spirit, true to their name, fought back again and scored three minutes later when Andy McDermott tucked away a low cross from Scott Thomas, who had turned the Knights defence inside out on the left to set up the opportunity.

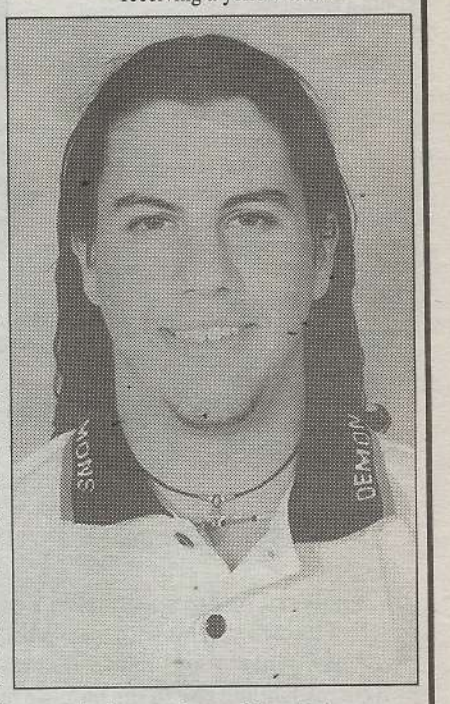
However all the good work was almost instantly undone a minute later as Porter made an excellent diagonal run to glance a header goal bound from a Daniel Vasilevski free-kick.

Northern Spirit came very close to equalising for a third time early in the second when Adrian Cervinski muscled a shot from scrappy defending, but was robbed off the line by Joey Rajher.

The Knights all but killed the game off in the 60th minute when Steve Horvat, center field, sent a probing ball into the box that was headed home by Andy Vargas who got around his marker far too easily.

Michael Cartwright wasted a golden opportunity to get Spirit back into the game ten minutes later when he blasted a ball over from close range after Watts nodded back from a corner.

De Jesus finished the route five minutes before full-time from the penalty spot when he was clearly brought down by Lupce Acevski in the box. The Spirit keeper' lucky to stay on the field only receiving a yellow card.



Ivo de Jesus: Scored for Melbourne Knights from the spot.

Aaron Burgess gave the home crowd something to cheer about with a late consolation goal. The young Spirit forward hit a nice strike into the roof of the net after Martin John came off his line unnecessarily.

The win lifts the Knights back into the top six while Northern Spirit slip out to eight.

National Soccer League

Olympic Sharks 3
Perth Glory 1

By Tim Caimakamis

The Olympic Sharks lived up to all expectations last Saturday night fulfilling their potential defeating the Perth Glory 3-1 at Toyota Park, thus inflicting the Western Australians' first loss of the season.

A crowd of 5831 witnessed an entertaining match, if not controversial, with the sending-off of Perth sweeper Craig Deans with just over 30 minutes to play.

"I don't know what it is, but Olympic (historically) struggles against the weaker teams but manages to rise to the challenge against the top teams", said Olympic stalwart and coach Gary Phillips.

An explosive start to the match saw Lindsay Wilson in the 5th minute, cross from the right to the far post. Making fast ground, Andrew Packer controlled and laid back for Tommy Pondeljak to slot home.

In the 10th minute, Wilson popped up on the left of goal, snapped in a short cross for Jeromy Harris on penalty spot. But under pressure Harris missed timed his volley. From the corner, the resulting clearance found Pondeljak outside the box and was unlucky his powerful shot was deflected back to the keeper.

With 15 minutes played, the Glory retaliated when Damian Mori raced 60 metres up middle drawing the defence, then played the ball to the unmarked Bobby Despotovski, who ran into the box and placed past keeper Bolton's near post to level the score 1-1.

As usual, it was Olympic who dominated play and possession for the half. They came close in the 20th minute when, Nick Carle put a through ball at the edge of the penalty box for Lindsay Wilson's angled ran from the right, and getting behind the defence towards goal from 6 yards, his shot was blocked by keeper Petkovic's legs.

Olympic regained the lead in the match after 26 minutes when, having been awarded a freekick 25 metres from goal and to the left, Olympic's inspiration Troy Halpin, curled his effort to the far post where with the keeper flatfooted, it was knocked in by Craig Deans under pressure for an own goal.

With Perth struggling to control the midfield, they seemed disjointed and apart from an attempt in the 40th minute through, a Mori cutback found Scott Miller near the penalty spot, his header was directed straight to keeper Bolton. The Glory went into the break 2-1 down, a new phenomenon for them this season.

Any chance Perth had, to regain control of the match disappeared in the 54th minute when Olympic sweeper Ante Juric supplied a long through ball for Harris, who was off and away toward the goal but brought down from behind by Deans on the edge of the box. Rightly referee Matthew Breeze sent off the Perth sweeper (Deans) for the offence, but luckily for the Glory, Halpin's freekick was directed straight to the keeper.

Nick Carle (right): Olympic's Man of the Match shields the ball from Perth Glory's Edgar Aldrighi.

Now with ten men, Perth's only real effort on goal came in the 56th minute when, Matt Horsley was put through by Gary Faria inside the box but his shot was weak enabling Bolton to stop the shot one-handed.

With both teams adopting a more cautious attitude for differing reasons, the tension began to mount. On 74 minutes a cross from Packer found Wilson unmarked, but his header narrowly missed the goals as keeper Petkovic confidently watched the ball sail wide.

The match was held up in 80th minute when Harris stretchered off (later diagnosed as a pelvic injury that could see him absent for two weeks) and replaced by Elias Demourtzidis, who made an immediate impact in the 86th minute with a neat 1-2 with Carle. His shot at goal from 12 metres was parried by the keeper.

In the 89th minute, Pondeljak counterattacked with a 40metre run but had little support and played the ball out to Packer on the left. Slowing up the play, Packer made it to the corner flag, then accurately between two defenders, found the unmarked Carle at the corner of the penalty box, who with the poise of an expert, snapped home a left footed volley leaving Petkovic stranded to seal the match at 3-1.

Commenting after the match, Perth's coach Mich D'avray reflected, "I have no complaints, as we were beaten by a better team (on the night)".

"We had a disappointing first half, and just when I thought we were coming back into the game in the second half, the sending-off just killed us," ended a disappointed Mich d'Avray.

Brisbane Strikers 2
Marconi Stallions 0

Angelo Costanzo (left) tussles for the ball with Brisbane Strikers' Daniel Dreger.

By Glenn Davis

Flamboyant Brazilian midfielder Fernando Rech broke the shackles of an uncharacteristic form slump to land a double for the Brisbane Strikers in their 2-0 win over Marconi at Ballymore on Saturday night.

In sweltering conditions, Rech ensured the Parmalat Strikers had some early Christmas cheer with two goals in four minutes.

Rech's first half double gave the home side the breathing space to repel a late charge from Marconi who played the last 20 minutes with superior numbers after Strikers' defender Jon McKain was sent off for deliberately kicking.

Rech has had a roller coaster season this year as he struggled with below par form and a groin injury.

However, coach John Kosmina could not have wished for better timing from Rech to step up to the plate to retain the Strikers' third placing on the ladder.

Rech's opening goal in the 29th minute was a gem involving a string of midfield passes before the Brazilian ace headed home a cross from Richie Alagich for the early lead.

Marconi had barely recovered from the set back before Rech pounced again, finishing off a pinpoint cross from Shane Stefanutto with another powerful header in the 33rd minute.

Kosmina was delighted with the result, especially after hearing leader Perth Glory lost to Olympic Sharks.

"I'm happy where we are at this stage of the season," Kosmina said. "It's nice to be third and five points clear of fourth place."

The only blot on the game for Kosmina came with McKain's send-off as he tried to square off for being fouled in an earlier incident.

"You don't have to square the ledger like that - well at least not that quick," Kosmina said.

"It was a silly send off and too obvious."

Kosmina agreed with rival Lee Steerey who rated Marconi unlucky not to have been a goal or two up early in the opening half.

"We were a bit sloppy at the back and could have copped a few early on," Kosmina said.

"I thought Rech had a blinder but the first two weeks in January will be our big test."

The Strikers started sensationally in the oppressive conditions with a barrage of crosses into the Marconi goalmouth in the opening two minutes. But despite the home side's strong start Marconi had three solid opportunities to open the scoring.

Marconi striker Norman Tome was put into the clear by midfielder John Maisano but his chip across the goalface failed to find its mark.

Marconi's best chance for an early lead came in the 13th minute when Kevo Gulesserian outstripped Strikers defender Ron McQuilter for pace, but his shot was brilliantly blocked in a superb save by Jason Kearton.

Marconi suffered an early blow when Gulesserian limped off with an ankle injury and was replaced by talented young striker Alex Brosque, who scored a late winner off the bench against Olympic the previous round.

Brosque, who had been with the Australian Institute of Sport on scholarship since January, was immediately involved and looked dangerous, showing up McQuilter who struggled with the heat before being replaced at the interval.

Strikers' keeper Jason Kearton again stood out and was only just shaded by Rech for man-of the match honours by Rech.

Kearton repelled several Marconi chances, notably one stinging header from close range from Tome. 12 minute after the break.

But perhaps his best came soon after McKain's send-off when he managed a fingertip save onto the upright again from a powerfully struck Tome shot.

Newcastle United 2
Sydney United 0

By Tim Caimakamis

Newcastle United clinically defeated Sydney United 2-0 on Friday night to remain as the only undefeated club of the competition.

In front of 9,136 at the newly renamed "Energy Australia Stadium", veteran midfielder Peter Tsekenis led the Newcastle side onto the pitch for his 200th NSL match, while sweeper Chris Zorocich also celebrated his 150th appearance.

Although the Bravehearts dominated the play and possession, they have experienced, like most other teams this season, a well-drilled defence that is difficult to penetrate. To make matters worse, Newcastle counterattack fast and in numbers, spearheaded by Joel Griffiths, to punish their opponents.

After a bright opening, the first half stagnated into a dull contest with little action on goal as referee Simon Micallef continually pulled up both sides for infringements. To make matters worse for Sydney and the game, the influential Kresimir Marusic limped off injured only 35 minutes into the match.

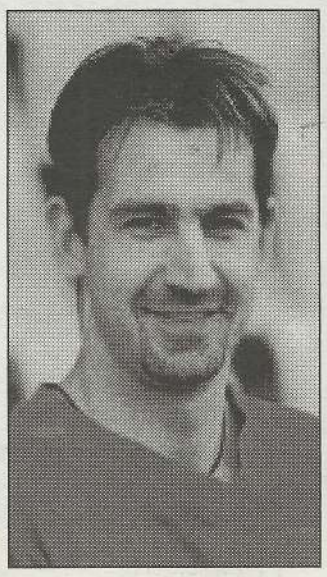
"As it turned out (the loss of Marusic) was quite significant as it was still nil-all when he came off," said Sydney coach Branko Culina.

The best chance for a goal in the half by either team fell to Newcastle in the 37th minute following a long ball from Matt Bingley to Griffiths wide on the left, Joel sent in a pinpoint cross to partner Esala Masi inside the box.

Expertly, Sydney keeper Vilson Knezevic smothered Masi's attempt on goal as well as blocking Bigley's rebound attempt.

In the second half, the match opened up with both teams desperate to find the winning goal. As it turned out it was Sydney who cracked under pressure in the 59th minute when Newcastle scored. From a neat cross by Esala Masi, the ball was relayed across the face of goal to an unmarked Joel Griffiths who duly smacked the ball into the roof of the net.

Culina used all his substitutes in an effort to spark-up his teams but to no avail. Commins Menapi came on for Zeljko Kopic in the 66th minute, while Aytec Genc replaced Goran Talevski in the 81st minute. For all of Sydney's possession, far too often their final pass was bad and miss-directed when it counted the most.



Peter Tsekenis: Played his 200th NSL game and was Man of the Match.

As it panned out, Newcastle sealed the result in the 86th minute by a goal from super-sub Daniel McBreen. Good work by Mark Wilson down the left flank, saw Newcastle draw the Sydney defence out wide, then chip the ball to an unmarked McBreen to head home into an empty net.

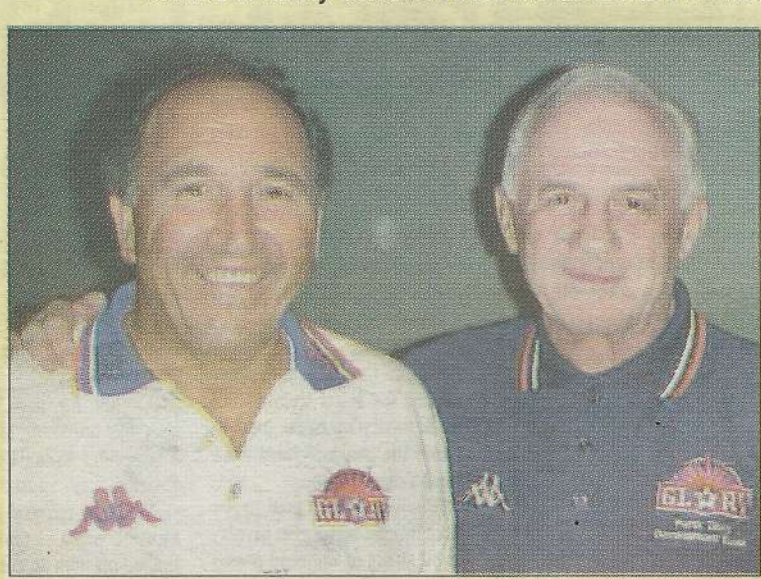
"I didn't think it was a particularly good game; some games you have to grind out and I thought tonight was one that we ground out without playing well." Commented Newcastle coach Ian Crook. Newcastle heads into it Christmas break without a lost in 12 rounds (6 wins and 6 draws) and will have a well earned rest as they also have the last bye of the round.

"When you lose, its always disappointing," reflected Culina. "Our final touch let us down; we're not world-beaters, but I expect a little better".

Images from the last Rou

• Marconi's Angelo Costanzo tries to ward-off the threat of a Brisbane attack, which eventually could not save the Stallions from defeat.

• Young South Melbourne striker, Massimo Murdocca under pressure from a challenge by Wollongong Wolves' Stuart Young.



• Nick Tana (left), Perth Glory chairman and Technical Adviser, Frank Arok put on smile last weekend despite Glory's first league loss of the season to Olympic Sharks.

• A cross-section of Olympic Sharks' fans, wellwishers and club members at the Christmas BBQ held by the club, last weekend.

• Wollongong Wolves' no-nonsense defender, Ben Blake in the thick of action against South Melbourne.

...nd of the NSL for 2001

Tommy Pondeljak of Olympic Sharks takes on the Perth Glory defence on Saturday night at the Toyota Park.

• Brisbane Strikers' players Kris Trajanovski (left) and Fernando Rech celebrating their 2-0 win over Marconi.

• Olympic Sharkettes, the cheerleading group of the Olympic Sharks before the weekend game against Perth Glory.

• Aerial view of the Toyota Park, Cronulla on Saturday night during the Olympic Sharks — Perth Glory game.

Olympic Sharks' Ante Juric (right) stops Perth Glory goalpoacher, Damian Mori.

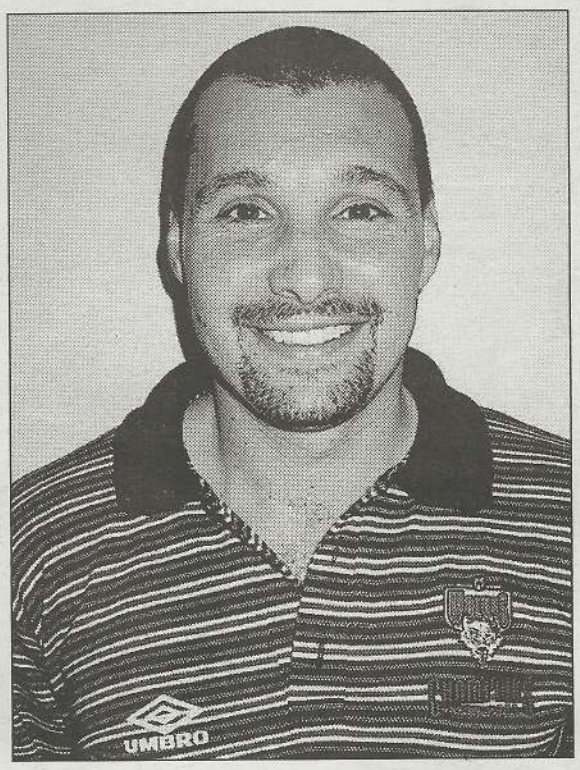
Souris out again for six weeks

Wollongong Wolves' skipper George Souris went under the surgeon's knife again on Tuesday, last week as his extended rehabilitation from injury continues with no end in sight. The operation reportedly went well as no complications were reported.

This time around, club sources explained that the operation was done to remove some excess scar tissue from Souris' previous operations, which were causing him great discomfort.

Souris, who has only appeared for the Wolves twice this season, is now facing another six weeks on the sidelines – forcing coach Ron Corry to once again resort to juggling his defensive options. So far, those options have not proved workable as the Wolves who are defending champions, have conceeded a whopping 18 goals after nine games.

The latest developmaent with Souris will surely be a source of frustration for the determined stopper- who doubles as team captain - and means that one of the team's most important players and central factor in their two title-winning runs, continues to remain out of action as the Wolves struggle at the foot of the NSL ladder.



George Souris: Another operation.

Points scoop for ACT Academy

The ACT Academy of Sport took maximum points from its two matches last weekend by beating the Queensland Academy of Sport 2-1 on Friday afternoon and Newcastle United 3-0 on Sunday.

In contrast, the Australian Institute of Sports lost to QAS by 5 - 1 on Saturday evening. In the Friday afternoon match against QAS the Academy team took the lead through a Mark Nedeljkovic goal in the 21st minute followed up by a Robbie Cattanach penalty just after the break.

It was deep into second half injury time when the QAS drew a goal back with a penalty to Matt Hilton.

Sunday afternoon saw the Academy team backup against a very strong Newcastle United team with six first grade players in the Newcastle starting line-up - including ex AIS players Mitchell Johnson, Joel Grenell and Tallan Martin.

The Academy score their first goal in the 33rd minute through Paul Ivanic.

The second half saw the majority of the play in the Academy's half as Newcastle bombarded the Academy's penalty area with crosses.

A combination of scrambling defence and some assistance from the woodwork saw the Academy team hold onto their lead.

Quick breaks from the Academy could not be contained by a stretched Newcastle defence and goals to John O'Brien (53rd) and to inspirational Academy captain Matt Menser (75th) sealed the win.

With six points added to their total the Academy is currently in 6th place on the league ladder - a most respectable position just shy of the half-way mark of the season.

The Academy now has a break until their next match on Saturday 5 January at 5.00pm against Sydney Olympic Youth.

SAPPHIRES' SIX WORTHY OF MATILDAS INVITE

New Matildas' Coach, Adrian Santrac, recently picked six players from the NSW Sapphires in his 18-member squad for January's Australia Cup tournament against South Korea.

The current Women's National Soccer League leaders contributed Anissa Tann, Kelly Golebiowski, Heather Garriock, Taryn Rockall, Joanne Peters and Cassandra Kell to Santrac's squad as Australia commence their preparations for the 2003 World Cup and 2004 Olympic Games.

Sapphires' coach, Allan Bourke, commented on Adrian Santrac's selections: "I'm happy with six players in a squad of eighteen. All six are worthy of their spot in the Australian side. They have worked hard to get there and will work just as hard to stay there."

While the selection of Tann, Garriock and Golebiowski were expected, Bourke was particularly pleased with the inclusion of Peters, Kell and Rockall. "Joanne Peters has had a break from high level football but this season she has returned with a bang and will prove once again to fans that she is a top quality international player.

Taryn Rockall made her debut for Australia this year and has continued to catch the eye while Cassandra Kell's drive to become a Matilda is unquestionable. She has sacrificed her work career to devote herself to goalkeeper training and the hard slog has paid off."

Three notable exceptions from the Matildas were Emma Davison, Alicia Cavanagh and Michelle Carney. Bourke says, "I think that Emma will benefit by gaining international experience by playing for the Young Matildas. Alicia Cavanagh did perform well at the Matildas' training camp last week and is one for the future while Michelle Carney is the most disappointing omission considering that she, as an attacking midfielder, would fit in well with Santrac's system of playing two support players behind the lone striker."

Also, National Youth Coach, Mike Mulvey, picked five players from the NSW Sapphires for the Young Matildas' training camp in January. The Young Matildas are preparing for their assault on the Oceania Under 19 Women's World Championship Qualifiers in April, and the Blues aiming to help the Aussies are Catherine Cannuli, Emma Davison, Collette McCallum, Nikki Pichon and Thea Slatyer. Coach Bourke said, "While I'm happy for the five players that have been selected, I'm sure that Kylie Ledbrook, Nicole Kimber and Kath Collins would have made good selections as well. It's all a matter of professional opinion I guess."

With January's pile-up of international games, the Women's NSL season takes its traditional break and will re-start for the Sapphires in early February with a game against Adelaide Sensation.

Kelly Golebiowski: Sapphires' top striker called-up to the Matildas.

NSL breaks for Christmas

By Emma Nwaneri

There will be no NSL games this weekend as the national competititon goes on break for the festive season of Christmas. Accordingly, no NSL games will hold this weekend, starting 28th December.

Following last weekend's matches which featured a repeat of last season's Grand Final decider between Wollongong Wolves and South Melbourne as the highlight, action resumes in the NSL on January 6, 2002 with all the clubs returning to the field. However, unbeaten Newcastle United will be having the weekend off, affording them a rare two-week rest.

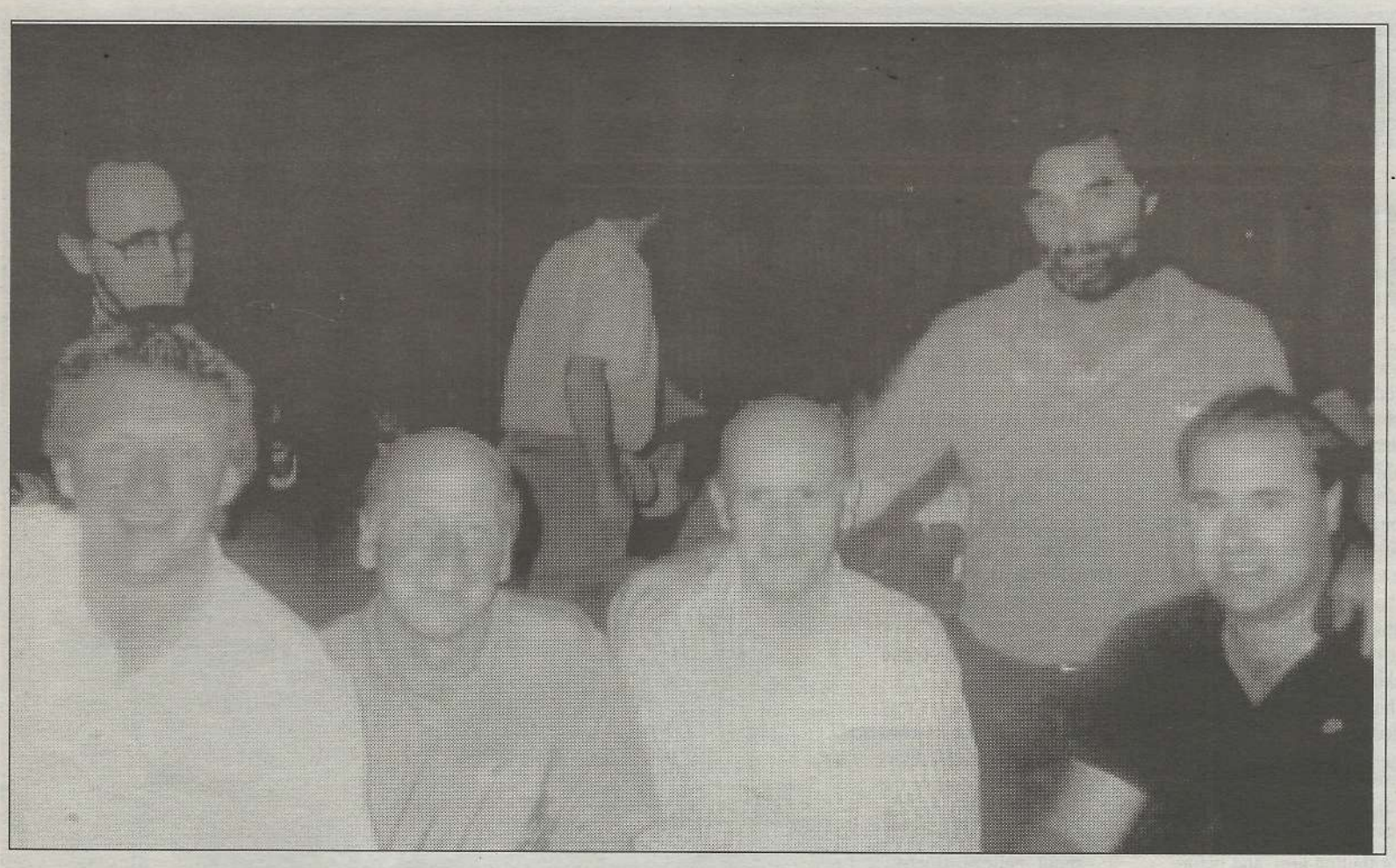
Soccer Australia also closed for the holiday season from Friday 21 December, but will re-open at on Wednesday, January 2.

Nonetheless, the Soccer Australia Media Department, as well as the National Soccer League, will continue to operate during this period with Anita Bulan, media contact for the NSL overseeing all matters.

In the first weekend of action in the New Year, Wollongong Wolves will once again kick-start hostilities with a home game against Northern Spirit on Friday January 4th, while Football Kingz will also be hosting Olympic Sharks at the Ericsson stadium in Auckland.

The following day, highriding Perth Glory will play host to Brisbane Strikers in front of their teeming supporters, while South Melbourne will be the visitors at the Marconi stadium in Sydney to lock horns with the Stallions.

To round up the first weekend of action in the New Year, Melbourne Knights will tackle Parramatta Power, while Sydney United file out against Adelaide City Force at the Sydney United Sports Centre.



Soccer's Hall of Fame award winner George Wallace together with son Ian (right) and England legends (from left, Dennis Law, Bobby Charlton and George Best.

"Dud Goalie" George Wallace enters Hall Of Fame

By Bert van Bedaf

His is the face in the crowd that everybody recognises. People walk up to say hallo. Everybody knows George Wallace and George Wallace knows everybody. He's been a fixture in soccer officialdom for 31 years and in recognition of his outstanding record he has been inducted in the Australian Soccer Hall of Fame - for making a "distinguished contribution" as official-speak put it.

A Londoner who went to Manchester at an early age, Wallace migrated to Melbourne in January, 1970. A few months later, he noticed an advertisement. The Victorian Soccer Federation was looking for an administrator and Wallace applied. He got the job and stayed ever since. He became the VSF's chief executive in the early 1980s and its president in 1991, a position he still holds. He is a life member of the VSF and Soccer Australia.

In an emotionally charged thank-you speech, Wallace dedicated his Hall of Fame award to his late wife, Jessie, and fought back tears when he thanked her "for her unswerving support over so many years", finishing with "to her memory I dedicate this award."

He is the most visible ambassador of the VSF. He attends more meetings, matches, tournaments, events, occasions or conferences than any other Victorian official. He is tireless, even at 75, and was recently re-elected unopposed as VSF president.

In 1977, he was appointed a FIFA instructor on administration in Fiji. He was also part of the organisation of the 1981 and 1993 World Youth championships. "This game (soccer) has been good to me," Wallace said.

"I've been fortunate in that respect."

He has toured the world and rubbed shoulders with the greatest in the sport. He has a photo of himself and son Ian, together with English legends Dennis Law, Bobby Charlton and George Best. It was taken in 1985 at a sports night in the eastern Melbourne suburb of Mooroolbark. It is one of many memorabilia and trophies that fill the cupboards at his home.

Wallace joined the British Army in 1944 at the latter stages of the Second World War. He de-commissioned as a warrant officer in 1948 and married Jessie shortly after.

Mrs Wallace died in 1996 after nearly 50 years at her husband's side.

"I'm a bachelor again. I'm cooking my own meals and do my own washing. The army training comes in handy," Wallace tried making light of what was and still is a devastating loss. He still lives in the first and only house he and his wife ever owned and shared in the beach suburb of Chelsea Heights in the south of Melbourne.

In 1952, Wallace re-joined the Army, which offered him a "colourful" life. He was seconded to the Indian Army and the Nigerian Army. With the British, he served in Cyprus and Egypt until the late 1960s.

"My wife got fed up with the packing up and moving all the time. When we were in Australia (in 1969) we liked what we saw and decided to come out here. I applied to get out of the army and we came to Melbourne in 1970," Wallace said.

Wallace played soccer in the army, but turned to refereeing. "I was a dud goalkeeper, but I wanted to be associated with the game and took up refereeing," Wallace said.

His highlight was the Army Cup Final in 1968, the military equivalent of the FA Cup. In Australia, he refereed a season in the (then) Metropolitan League before joining the VSF as its chief administrator.

His most embarrassing experience happened when Australia played Israel at Olympic Park in 1980. In a shocking moment, the match announcer played the German anthem instead of the Israeli anthem. "It was a real low point," said Wallace, who was pictured in a Melbourne paper with his face buried in his hands.

Over the years the sport in Victoria has grown enormously at the grassroots but is lacking support at senior level. A recent derby between the Melbourne Knights and South Melbourne attracted barely over 10,000 at Colonial stadium.

"When I came here in 1970 (pre-NSL days), it was not unusual to have 20,000 spectators at a game. Clubs like Footscray JUST, Brunswick Juventus and South Melbourne Hellas attracted enormous crowds," Wallace recalled.

"The crowds are still there. The international matches against Iran(1997) and France (and Uruguay last November) proved that. We have the people if the right product is produced. Soccer at junior level is enormous and international success will boost that even further.

"In 1974 (when Australia qualified for the World Cup) we had 250 junior teams in Victoria. By 1975 we had 800," he said. Today junior registration (boys and girls) is nearing 60,000.

Two of Wallace's biggest cases were the expulsion of Melbourne Croatia(now Knights) from what was then the State League (now the Victorian Premier League) in early 1970s and the attempted culling of four clubs from the same league in the late 1980s. The VSF believed the 16-club league had become far too large and wanted it cut to 12 clubs.

"We tried to cut the bottom four sides from the league. But the clubs took legal action against us. We lost the court case, because we had not given clubs enough notice," Wallace said.

He believed "the opening up of the federation (VSF)" in the late 1970s to be a highlight of his administration. "Before that it was a closed shop. The federation was closed to clubs from all district leagues," Wallace said.

Today, clubs can rise through the ranks and reach the VPL. He cited now defunct Eastern Pride as an early of example of how a climb to the top had been made possible. Pride began its ascendancy as Morwell Falcons in district soccer. It rose to win promotion to the VPL and eventually gained entry into the National Soccer League in the early 1990s. Its demise at the end of last NSL season was a combination of poor club administration and regional economic decline.

At national level the sport is again in turmoil with claims of maladministration, the threat of bankruptcy and players' revolt over wages.

"We know where the players are coming from. What is not understood is where the money is coming from. There is no sufficient television exposure to generate cash," Wallace said.

Victoria has taken a severe beating in recent years with only two clubs left in the NSL after Eastern Pride and Carlton collapsed last season.

"What has happened to (NSL club) Collingwood (Warriors, collapsed 1997), Carlton and Eastern Pride has put Victoria back to square one. But there's still room for a third team in Melbourne," Wallace, ever optimistic, maintained.

Corry may axe players

Wollongong Wolves' coach, Ron Corry will soon announce far-reaching changes in the team set-up and a number of players may be placed on transfer by the underperforming NSL champions.

Changes to his side for their upcoming matches are now being finalised, with some senior players tipped to be affected.

"We spoke with him and he ensured that there would be changes made in the next two weeks," Club chairman, Joe Cachia said last week.

"We expect things to improve in the next weeks and we will be monitoring things during that time."

Cachia also assured that coach Ron Corry's job was safe despite the back-to-back champions' dismal position at the foot of the NSLeague table.

Cachia was part of a Wolves' advisory committee that met in a crisis meeting with Corry last week. "Ron's job was never in question to start with," Cachia told reporters.

The Wolves have had just one win and three draws from ten games so far this season - scoring a measly 8 goals along the way.

Ironically, they are now a pale shadow of the side that swept to two back-to-back NSL championships, blitzing all other teams along the way.

Analysts however believe that the sudden and unexpected cancellation of the June World Club championships by FIFA spelled the start of the Wolves' problems. If they had joined seven other clubs around the world in that competition, then billed for La Coruna in Spain, they were certain to pocket $A11m.

The contrary happened however and the club, ill-equpped to meet the monetary demends of its key players, watched helplessly as several of its top stars packed up and left at the end of the last season.

Potent strikers Saso Petrovski and Scott Chipperfield left for Europe, while long-time skipper Matt Horsley shifted base to high-flying Perth Glory.

The Wolves management was left to rely on untested and mediocre talent sourced from other less-endowed NSL and local clubsides, and the result has been that the new players have consistently underperformed much to the chagrin of the club's supporters.

ROBSON, O'LEARY CLASH OVER VIDUKA'S CHALLENGE

Robson, O'Leary clash over Viduka's challenges Leeds boss David O'Leary became embroiled in a bitter war of words with Newcastle manager Bobby Robson on Saturday following the Magpies thrilling 4-3 win at Elland Road.

Newcastle staged a dramatic second-half comeback to snatch the points with a last gasp-winner after Leeds had strolled into a 3-1 lead.

Leeds Manager David O'Leary, defends striker Mark Viduka over his challenges on Nicolas Dabizas.

Robson's men stretched their advantage at the top of the table to three points as Craig Bellamy, Robbie Elliott, Alan Shearer - with a penalty - and Nolberto Solano scored the goals to inflict upon Leeds their first home league defeat for 11 months.

However, it was two Mark Viduka first-half challenges which angered Robson, and in turn led to O'Leary hitting back at the Geordies' 68-year-old boss.

In the first incident, Viduka broke Nikos Dabizas' nose with a flailing arm, and before half-time, the Greek international was a victim of the Leeds striker once again and had to be stretchered off.

Robson believes Viduka, who grabbed Leeds' second goal five minutes after the break, should not have even been on the pitch.

"Overall the referee gave a constant performance but I think he failed in not giving Viduka his marching orders," Robson said.

"That was the one big mistake that he made because he's normally a referee that will deal with that type of thing and is not afraid to make those kind of decisions.

"But it was a red card, it was direct and it was violent, although he (Viduka) was lucky with the first challenge anyway on Dabizas.

"He broke his nose in that, but he only got one yellow card from two violent offences.

"But I'm not so bitter now because we have gone on and won the match."

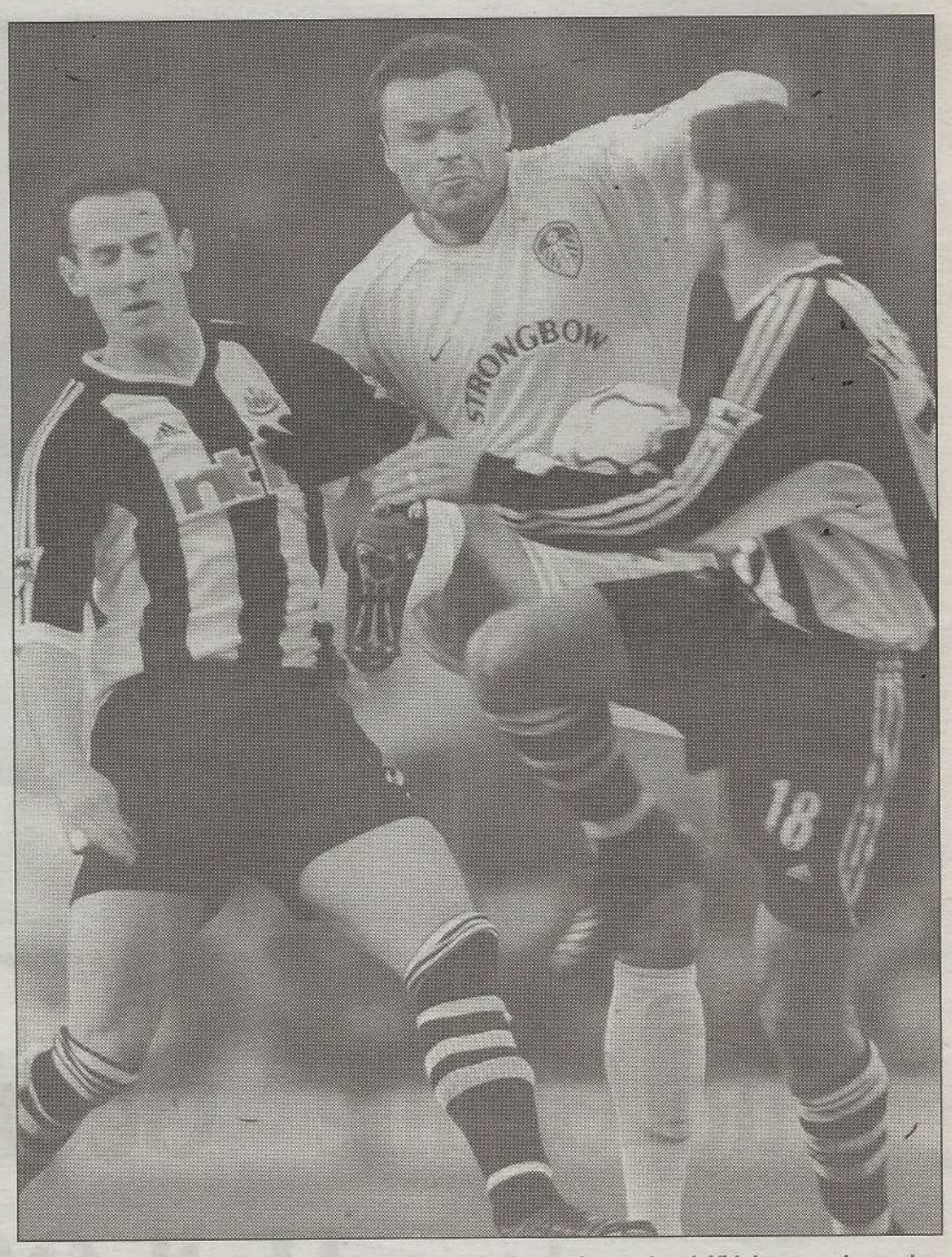
When O'Leary made his way to the after-match media conference, Robson was still referring to the incidents outside the press room, which led the 43-year-old Irishman to snap back.

"I cannot believe Bobby," said O'Leary. "He is still going on about it and I think he might still be going on about it on the coach home.

"He is out of order for what he has said. Mark is a footballing centre-forward and it was a stupid forward's challenge. I don't think he meant what happened.

"I have seen Bobby defend Alan Shearer for similar things over the last few seasons so I'm quite surprised with Bobby on this one.

"Good luck to him with the result, but has he harped on about it!"



Mark Viduka in action against Newcastle United over the weekend. Viduka scored a goal, broke an opponents nose, and received a controversial yellow card for a poorly executed tackle on Nicolas Dabizas.

Reid close to Bolton move

Wollongong midfielder Paul Reid is reportedly close to agreeing terms with Bolton Wanderers.

Reid enjoyed a welcome return to form last night in a man-of-the-match performance against South Melbourne including a late goal.

He told the Illawara Mercury, "I trained well over there and I am keeping my fingers crossed that something will come of it.

"I trained once a day, sometimes twice with both the senior team and the reserve grade team.

"We also did a few weight sessions a week. It is a full-time job preparing for matches.

"I think their (Bolton's) main aim this year is to stay in the Premier League.

"They are a team a lot of people thought would go down, so they have done pretty well so far."

Paul Reid (left) is set to become the latest NSL star to play overseas after a successful trial with Premier League club Bolton Wanderers. Reid is seen here in action against South Melbourne over the weekend.

KNIGHTS MRKSA BLASTS KNOPP

The Melbourne Knights president Harry Mrksa has blasted Soccer Australia chaiman Ian Knop over comments he made suggesting that Melbourne could only sustain one NSL club.

Mrksa told SBS's 'On the Ball' program that the NSL's traditional clubs are fed up with the way Soccer Australia has been running the league of late, and will begin to "take matters into their own hands" if it continues.

The two clubs in question, South Melbourne and Melbourne Knights struggle to compete financially with fully professional outfits like the Perth Glory and Northern Spirit.

Much speculation over the future of the national league surrounds the financial viability of clubs, and that if clubs can't sustain themselves financially they should be omitted from the league.

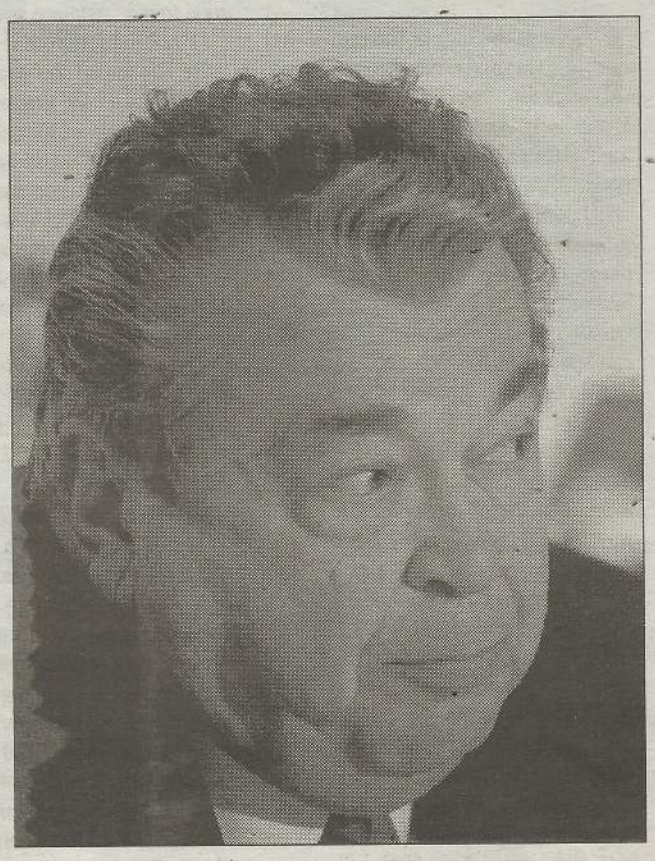
Knop recently stated in an interview with SBS's soccer website, that he believes Melbourne is a very difficult market and that the future looked bleak for two national teams, despite Sydney having five.

Mrksa, on the rebound retorted, "Melbourne is a big city with a big community that loves soccer and we now expect Melbourne to go to three or four clubs – not to one.

"Melbourne used to have seven clubs in the league. The fact that he is talking about one club only - I cannot believe.

"Maybe Ian is in Christmas mood when he is talking about it. I don't know how anyone could say that.

"We (traditional clubs) will not break away but we will start to run our own league – or rather control our league."



Melbourne Knights president Harry Mrksa.

MATILDAS DOOR STILL OPEN FOR MURRAY

Julie Murray: Matildas' coach Adrian Sentrac still wants her in the team.

By Graham Cooke

National women's coach Adrian Santrac has not ruled midfielder Julie Murray out of his future plans for the Matildas.

Murray, arguably the greatest women's player Australia has produced, announced her retirement from the game after being named Player of the Season in the inaugural United States National League competition.

However, Santrac said Murray might well limit that retirement to professional football in the US. "I have had a talk with her since she came back to Australia and while she seems to have been around for ever, she is still only in her early 30s," he said.

"That's too young for a player with her gifts to retire, and she's now keen to go on playing for Australia. That's great news for us.

"Julie is outstanding, a proven goals corer at the highest level — you can't buy those kinds of players.

"If she remains fit and motivated and available for Australia, that would be just wonderful."

Murray began her senior career in Canberra, representing the Weston Creek club, before moving to Sydney and then overseas.

DEAKIN U/15s LIFT PACIFIC TITLE

By Graham Cooke

Canberra Deakin's U/15 team have won the South Pacific Junior Championships, overcoming home ground advantage to beat West II 2-1 in the final of the tournament, played in Lautoka, Fiji.

Deakin showed character and maturity to win over a team that had beaten them 6-0 in the group phase of the tournament and had remained unbeaten on the way to the final.

The tournament has the dual purpose of allowing young players of potential to experience the game at international level, and of fostering soccer in the South Pacific.

Entry is open to club teams from metropolitan areas who are premiers or grand finalists in their competitions, or who can prove they are of strong A-grade standard.

Further information can be obtained from the sports department of Sportswell Tours in Sydney on 02 9212 5080.

Results were: Pool A, North I 0 Camden Tigers 3, South I 0 Edgeworth 1, West I 1 Camden Tigers 2, North I 2 South I 0, West I 3 Edgeworth 0, North I 4 Edgeworth 2, South I 1 Camden Tigers 2, West I 0 North I 0, Camden Tigers 3 Edgeworth 0, West I 1 South I 0.

Pool B: North II 1 Menai Hawks 1, South II 0 Canberra Deakin 3, West II 3 Menai Hawks 0, North II 0 South II 2, West II 6 Canberra Deakin 0, North II 0 Canberra Deakin 4, South II 2 Menai Hawks 1 West II 4 North II 0, Canberra Deakin 2 Menai Hawks 1, South II 0 West II 5.

Semi-finals: Canberra Deakin 2 Camden Tigers 1, West II 2 West I 1.

Final: Canberra Deakin 2 West II 1.

*Two members of the ACT Academy of Sport's National Youth League squad have been selected to represent Australia in the Oceania Under-16 tournament to be held in Sydney next month.

David Kemp (midfield) and Adam Casey (striker) will join the 18 other players from around the country at the pre-tournament camp in mid-January.

Casey has been selected to join the Australian Institute of Sport program in 2002, having been picked by the academy as a 14-year-old last season.

Wollongong News

By Otto Bader

Wolves Drastic Approach the last match this year away to South Melbourne was used by coach Ron Corry to revamp his flagging team, bringing fringe players, eager to perform, demanding eventual a starting spot into the squad.

Talents like Darren McDonald, Greg Sharland, Naum Sekulovski, Vlado Srbinovski, Liam Austin and Harvey Rodriguez are all ready to replace several out-of-form regulars. The coach could make up to 5 or 67 changes to the last eleven which lost disappointingly at WIN Stadium against an ordinary Melbourne Knights outfit. The club needs a lift which could come with an improved first team performance. Skipper George Souris under the knife for the second time, will not be back for another two months, much to his personal disappointment. Another groin operation last week was necessary to remove excess scar tissue.

Christmas Gathering at Brandon Park for all Wolves players including Youth Grade players plus invited guest and sponsors the get-together was a very friendly affair. Mike Crowe the new CEO of the Wolves thanked all friends for their support, confirming unity of players, coaches, administration and Board at the club, need to work together to overcome present problems and endeavour to turn things around was his motto. The job presents a real challenge for the incoming CEO, particular under circumstances not favourable to the club at the moment. He sounded optimistic being able to improve the clubs situation.

Young Wolves – enjoy third spot on the table with 24 points, 8 wins, 3 losses, goals 28/16, defeating Marconi 4:1 in their last game. They face next Sydney United Colts. Coach Eddie Tesoro hopes to maintain present form, aiming for points in the early games next month, essential for the side to stay close to the front runners.

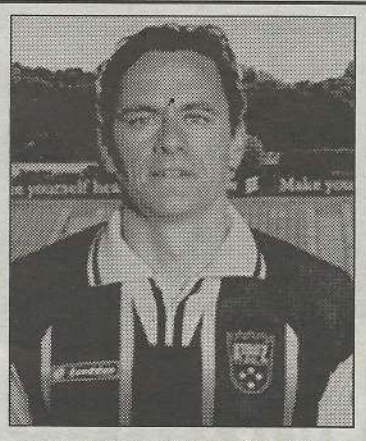
France Trip for Youngsters – planned for May 2002 coach Eddie Tesoro is looking for approximately $50,000 sponsorship to to finance the adventure. Several quality games against leading French teams are in the pipeline.

Possible contacts are available with German club Werder Bremen where Australia youngsters Joseph Di Ioro from originally Sunshine George Cross Bullen, is under contract. The Wolves coach could use New Zealands Wynton Rufer who played many season successfully for Bremen to open contacts, as well as Rufers association with the FIFA Football Committee. A bit of ground work is required.

Overseas Guests – former Wolves players Scott Chipperfield – now in Switzerland and Sasho Petrovski – now in Denmark, are home for 3 weeks during their clubs winter break.

They attended the Wolves Christmas function. Talking to both, it emerged the two are doing well – Scott with Basel has scored 4 goals so far, his team leading the table at present, his knowledge of German is slowly coming along, luckily his coach is fluent in English. Sasho is playing in the SAS sponsored Danish Superliga with Viborg FF, scored 6 goals since joining, still settling in, returns early January in preparation for the second leg of the competition, they go to Spain for a lengthy training camp to escape the harsh winter in Denmark. He is on a 3 year contract with his club.

WIN Stadium New Stand Building Progress – work is still going on to build a new grandstand, during a busy soccer season mind you why not in the winter season with Rugby League only playing a handful of games or even less if the stand is not ready in time. Reports that the new stand might not be completed for Saint George Dragons that the new stand might not be completed for Saint George Dragons or whatever, possibly missing one



Wynton Rufer: Helping the Wolves with foreign imports from Germany.

home game out of total 6 or 7 perhaps in Wollongong is flabbergasting. It makes one wonder if the powers to be used soccer as a political tool to pressurise the NSW Government to pour money into that White Elephant the WIN Stadium.

Wollongong Council had a developer to pay millions for the beach location to use the position for commercial purposes, a huge hotel resort. Freeing funds to enlarge Brandon Park would have resulted from a sale which brings Brandon Park back to its initially classified use as a community sporting complex for everybody.

For sporting events Brandon Park is far better suited, now, when or if ever, the spot is to be used for commercial purposes, a perfect example to sue political muscle which soccer obviously does not possess.

Illawarra Conference League – originally 17 clubs nominated for the 2002 ICU First Division. One club is considering pulling out, leaving 16 teams. Hopefully the BYE is gone, making it possible to play home/away games. With the new numbers in total 30 matches need to be played which results in a rather congested season.

In order to reach an equilibrium with the ICU Premier League to play 22 rounds, the Conference Leggie plays 17 rounds once and then needs to be split into groups for the remaining 5 games. In hindsight the initial proposal of the ISA of 14 teams in each league would be now with 28 clubs quite feasible and the logical format to follow. Unfortunately the clubs decided otherwise being lobbied by individual interest groups.

During the next soccer year both competitions need to be monitors and evaluated if they can be improved upon clubs accepted for the ICU Conference League are – Albion Park WE, Barbarians, Berkeley, Bellambi, Dapto, Fernhill, Helensburgh, Highlands, Northern United, Ruse, Shellharbour City, Shoalhaven City, South Coast United, University, Warilla Wanderers, Woonona.

Outlook 2002 Conference League – on first glance the league provides equal strong teams with last seasons top-ended placed clubs Warilla Wanderers, Albion Park WE, South Coach United, University and Helensburgh expected to do well again. They will be knocking on the door for promotion. On the other hand the remaining clubs certainly are able to spring a surprise with new structures, new coach appointments and additional players strengthening their squads. This time around 22 rounds are scheduled to decide the placing and eventual champion.

Equipment gone – Shellharbour City lost water hoses and couplings, being at Keith Bond Oval for years.

They are not normal garden hoses, more industrial types, not even new but rather faded due to wear and tear, no use at home. Please keep that in mind if somebody offers long hoses for sale and perhaps phone President Andy Campbell on 4885 2360 or 4251 4431, all sports are struggling for equipment and are hurt when it is lost.

If someone borrowed the hoses and attachments from Keith Bon Oval please return them, no questions will be asked.

Training under new head coach Barney King has been successful in the last couple of month, even on the final day over 20 turned up. For next year training commences on January Tuesday 8th. Thursday 10th start 6pm and additional every Saturday first 12th start 10am followed same days right through until the competition starts in March. Come along to Keith Bond Oval, Fisher Street, Oak Flats and see the coach.

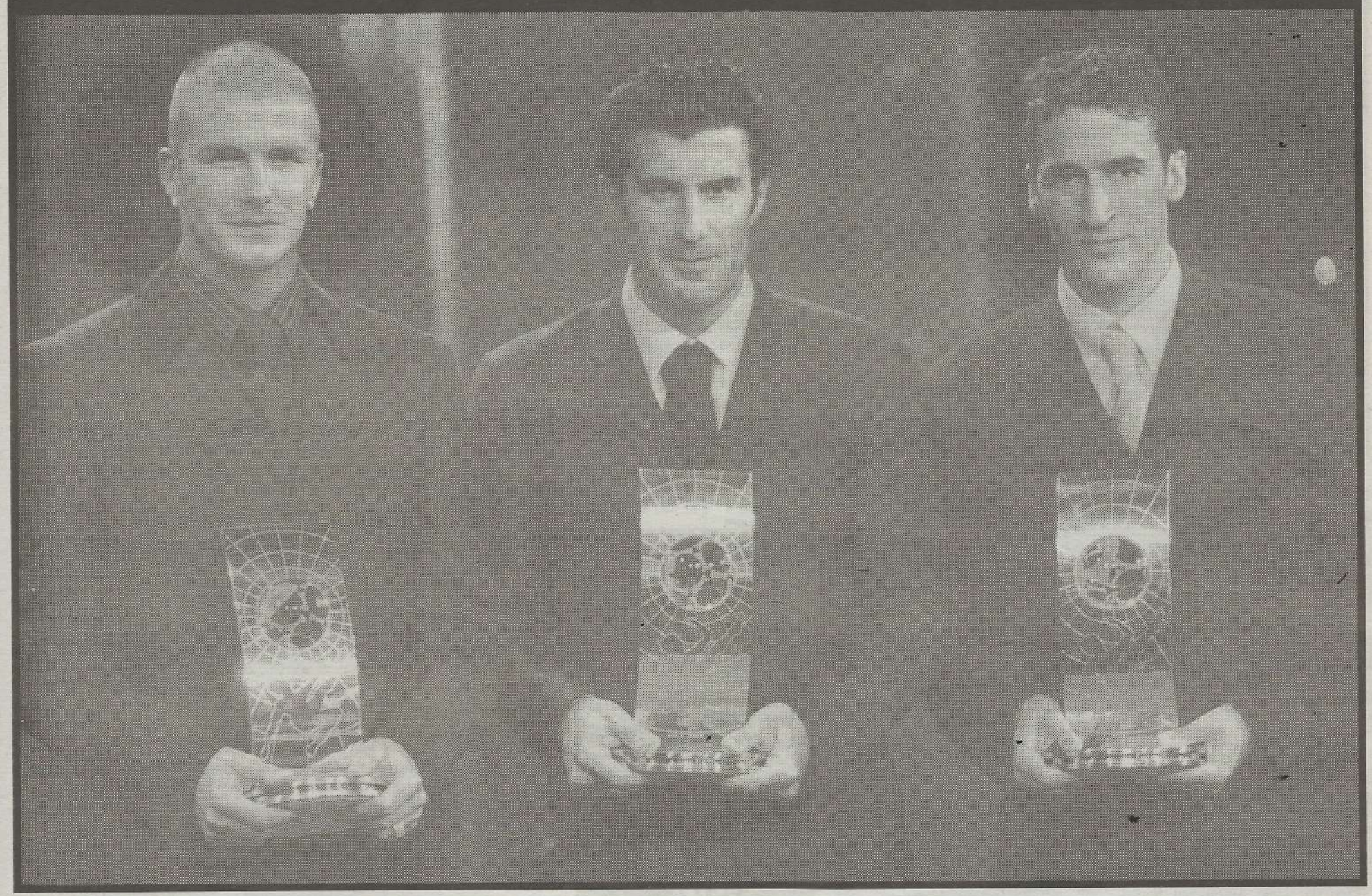
Junior Soccer a thriving progress, increasing numbers from a humble beginning, taking records 1992 including Roo-Ball registrations were 3610 compared with this year 7343 registrations. Ever more are expected to join up 2002, Girls are playing soccer in growing numbers.

Viewing the Treasurers Budget forecast for the Junior Soccer Association 2002 total expenditure is estimated with $204,000 which includes GST of about $15,000 – a burden for a non-profit sporting body. Insurance cost increased greatly, budget estimate $82,000. For the development of Juniors coaching clinics are scheduled at a forecast cost of $21,000 plus $16,000 for employment of individual coaches.

Soccer Castigation – at present the sports writers are falling over themselves to knock Australia Soccer – all organisations from the National Team, National League, Administrators, coming up with all sorts of futuristic suggestions, nothing concrete to work with. While they have their fun, the game carries on regardless, soccer will progress, maybe at snails pace, eventually rejuvenated after recent set-backs.

Other local codes calling themselves falsely football, are doing their best to down grade soccer, just ignores the snipes. Supporters don't despair, the sport of soccer is bigger than other local codes and will survive, the knockers will not succeed, we won't let them. We might suffer but will not lay down, despite poisonous commentary by the opposition media.

WORLD BEST PLAYERS OF 2001



BECKHAM'LL MAKE MADRID COMPLETE – FIGO

World Player of the Year, Luis Figo gave an interview last week, to speak about his new award of 2001 Player of the Year, excerpts of which are presented below:

Q: - Last year you were the second and this year FIFA awarded you the title of the World Player of the Year.

Figo: To receive that title is a great honour for me because there are a lot of players who deserve to be awarded it.

Q - You became the first, and Raul - the second. Does Real Madrid intend to establish their hegemony over the entire world?

Figo: I would be glad if Raul received that accolade as well. I won that title thanks to him as well as my teammates and the Portuguese national team players.

Q: Do you think that your move to Real contributed it?

Figo: Yes, I do because I play in the best team of the world, where great players are gathered. Playing with them one is compelled to improve his performance level.

Q: Last year you became the second player of the year but won the Golden Ball. This year you were named the World Player of the Year but occupied the sixth place among the best players of Europe. How would you comment it?

Figo: One cannot win all titles.

Q: In Portugal they say that you are better than Eusebio.

Figo: We must not be compared with each other. We belong to different football epochs. The development of the Portuguese football is linked to the name of Eusebio. But I am proud of being compared with him.

Q: When you started your football career could you dream of such recognition?

Figo: I have never drawn plans concerning my football career. I have never thought of that accolade. But when one plays in Real, he hopes that he can win that accolade irrespective of his will.

Q: Will you remember the year of 2001 forever?

Figo: Yes, I will remember it because I am happy now. This year my team became the Spanish champions, reached the 2002 World Cup and I held that title.

David Beckham: "He is a great player."

Q: What would you say about Beckham who occupied the second place?

Figo: He is a great player. Once Raul and I were joking and said that Real Madrid acquire a star every year. Now it is Beckham's turn. It would be interesting if Beckham, Raul and I played together in Real next year.

I WANT TO ACHIEVE MORE RAUL

Real Madrid and Spanish international forward Raul Gonzalez, who earned third place in the list for the World Player of the Year title, also gave an interview. Below are excerpts:

Q - Your teammate Luis Figo was named the World Player of the Year. What would you say about it?

Raul: He deserved that accolade because he is a great player. I was sure that he would win.

Q - Do you recollect that when you joined Real you said that you would do your utmost to be named the World Player of the Year?

Raul: Yes, I do. I achieved much and I will continue to achieve more and more successes. First of all, I want to enjoy football because I like it.

Q - What did you feel when saw that Figo was receiving the accolade from Blatter?

Raul: I was happy. Figo and Beckham are great players. I will remember it forever.

Q - What did this year give you?

Raul: The year of 2001 was fruitful. First, our team became the Spanish champions; second, I became one of the world's top strikers.

Q - What would you say about your future?

Raul: I will continue my career only in Real. If my relations with the club board remain the same then I will not have a reason to look for another club. I want to continue and end my career just here. But nobody can predict the future.

Van Gaal to succeed Fergie?

Former Dutch coach Louis van Gaal has again been linked with becoming the next manager at Manchester United FC.

Three weeks ago the 50-year-old coach resigned as Holland's manager following their failure to qualify for the 2002 World Cup.

United coach Sir Alex Ferguson will retire at the end of the season, and the club are looking for someone to replace him. Van Gaal is the only one among high-profile coaches who is not currently under contract.

The *Daily Express* claimed that representatives from Old Trafford have contacted Van Gaal's agents within the last week.

United have made an early move because German side Hertha Berlin are keen to make Van Gaal their new boss, according to the report.

AFC Ajax coach Co Adriaanse has been sacked recently, and Van Gaal was expected to return to his former club, but Ronald Koeman took over Ajax.

Van Gaal's reputation was dented when Holland failed to qualify for the World Cup.

However, he created the last great Ajax side and led them to the Champions League win in 1995.

He also reorganized FC Barcelona and led them to the Spanish title in each of his two years with them.

And he himself has said: "I can imagine that a club like Manchester United would be interested in Louis van Gaal."

Louis Van Gaal: Latest candidate to be linked to Manchester United job.

AC MILAN BOSS LIVID WITH REFS

AC Milan vice-president Adriano Galliani was last week furious with famous referee Pierluigi Collina, because the latter had disallowed the goal by Jose Mari during Sunday's 1-0 defeat at Roma.

Galliani opined that recently there have been numerous cases when referees showed subjective attitude towards the players.

Speaking to press, Galliani commented on the disallowed goal: "I'll ask you a question: what do you think will happen if Milan beat the champions away from home? Obviously, there would come the end of the world.

"You will ask why am I speaking on that now? Because I have lost my patience. We have been silent for a long time, but enough is enough. We are ready for a "war", if necessary.

From now on, we are going to watch the referees. I won't let anyone harm Milan," added the annoyed vice-president.

Parma fires "surprised" Passarella

Fabrizio Carmignani was last week appointed Parma coach until the end of the season after Daniel Passarella was sacked.

The news came after Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti rejected reports that Arrigo Sacchi would quit the San Siro to become Parma's technical director.

Parma still want former Azzurri boss Sacchi to work as general manager alongside Carmignani.

Ancelotti himself was in the frame for a return to the Stadio Ennio Tardini after Parma sacked Sacchi's predecessor Renzo Ulivieri. But the former Juve coach made a last minute u-turn when the Milan job became available and he has declared that Parma will be frustrated once more.

Ancelotti said: "I'm sure he will not join Parma.

He went on to express sympathy for the club where he made his name as a coach. "I'm very sad for Parma," he continued. "The club, the city, the supporters deserve a great position in Italian football.

"Passarella was unlucky. He joined a team he didn't know, he hadn't enough time to work, and his team had a difficult run of games."

Argentina's World Cup-winning captain Passarella was dismissed following the 4-1 defeat by Atalanta at the weekend despite being given reassurances over his position.

David Passarella: "I was surprised."

"I am surprised," said Passarella, who was only appointed six weeks ago. "I had planned the future with the club and I didn't think I'd be fired.

Carmignani, a former goalkeeping coach, was victorious when he stood in following the dismissal of Ulivieri against Perugia earlier this season. "I talked with president Tanzi and he explained his ideas," explained Carmignani, who is best known as Gedeone.

"I don't know if Arrigo Sacchi will come back to Parma, I only know that he doesn't want to be a head coach again," he added.

Only Venezia stand between Parma and last spot in Serie A, and three points now separate the club from safety.

The season got off to the worst possible start with elimination in the qualifying stages of the Champions' League by Lille.

Parma are facing their worst ever season in the Italian top flight. Since winning promotion to Serie A for the first time in 1990, Parma have never finished outside of the top seven.

Guardiola fights against ban

Brescia midfielder Pep Guardiola, who has failed a second dope test for banned steroid nandrolone last week, will meet Giacomo Aiello, the Italian antidoping committee official.

The Spanish international will be accompanied by his lawyers Tommaso Marchese and Cor Hellingmann. They are going to prove that the decision to disqualify the player is illegal. Guardiola will try to persuade Aiello that he had not taken any substance.

"I am going to tell Aiello that there was no need for me to take nandrolone, especially considering the fact I have just moved to Italy," said former Barcelona FC player.

Meanwhile, Guardiola has already asked Catalan national team manager Pichi Alonso to include him into the squad for the friendly against Chilean national team on December 28.

Theoretically, Pep has the chance to start in the lineup for the game unless he enlists Aiello's support.

Pep Guardiola

Bumper prize for World Cup champs

The winning team in the 2002 World Cup finals in South Korea and Japan next year will receive 12.4 million Swiss francs, 70 percent more than in the last World Cup, FIFA announced last week.

The executive committee of world football's governing body decided after a meeting that the 32 finalists taking part in the event next summer will receive a total of 201 million Swiss francs, about 51 percent more than in the 1998 World Cup.

"For the winner that means a 70 percent increase compared to France," FIFA president Joseph Blatter told journalists.

"Despite the fact it is so expensive, we have to give adequate reward for the winner," Blatter added.

At least one million Swiss francs is already being paid to each team taking part, on top of the minimum 1.5 million Swiss francs they will receive for reaching the first round of the finals, FIFA added.

With further funds to cover travel and other expenses, Blatter said he was confident even the poorest national squads taking part would break even.

RONALDO EYES TWO MORE WORLD CUPS

Inter Milan and Brazil national team striker Ronaldo stated last week he is fit and ready to play another couple of World Cups.

For about two years Ronaldo has been haunted by a knee injury, which kept him out of game.

In an interview to Sao Paolo newspaper *O Estado* he told that he would better be a champion than merely a star.

Actually he won the title in 1994 World Cup hosted by USA, but was on the bench of Brazil national team during the event. On Saturday the Brazilian striker played full 90 minutes first time since the injury and in yesterday's match scored twice and secured alongside with Christian Vieri 3-0 victory over Verona.

"I feel pretty good. I just need more games and more speed work", said Ronaldo, who in the last match showed the abilities for which he was chosen as a 1998 Best Player.

Ronaldo was surprised that in his homeland many still disbelieve that he has fully recovered from the knee injury.

BOWYER GETS REPRIEVE

LEEDS' midfielder Lee Bowyer has been taken off the transfer list.

The England midfielder climbed down and finally agreed to pay the fine of four weeks' wages imposed by his club late last week.

Bowyer had been cleared of all charges relating to an attack on Sarfraz Najeib.

But Leeds said he had broken their code of conduct when he admitted in court that he had been drinking on the night of the attack.

Bowyer initially refused to pay the fine and the club responded by immediately placing him on the transfer list.

But two days later — and after pleas from Leeds supporters — he changed his mind.

Leeds chairman Peter Ridsdale said: "A financial contribution equivalent to that previously stated has been agreed between the three parties and will be put towards the club's community programme for work within inner city communities and a local children's hospice.

Bowyer had been stung by the disciplinary action after being found not guilty. He initially said: "The club appears to be victimising me and forcing me out having attempted to impose an unfair penalty by agreement. Given these circumstances, I could not accept the disciplinary findings.

However, I wish to place on record that I still wish to play for Leeds United."

RUSSO WRITES

By Joe Russo

This last week has seen mixed fortunes for the Maldini family; Dad Cesare received some excellent news while son Paolo not so good.

Cesare Maldini was the coach of the Italian national team at the 1998 World Cup in France. He is of course a former great player and a former great coach of Italy's Under 21 sides.

At the junior level he set the standards by which all other Italian coaches will be judged.

However, his transition to senior level was not so successful; Italy lost in a penalty shootout to France in the quarter-finals of the 1998 World Cup. Maldini was sacked and replaced by Dino Zoff.

Now he is set to return to the world stage with Paraguay in Japan and Korea next year. Maldini late last season took over the reigns at his beloved AC Milan side when the then coach, Alberto Zaccheroni, was sent packing.

Maldini will be an excellent acquisition for Paraguay as their national team boss at the World Cup. They are a flamboyant side, like most South American national teams, but could do well with some 'Italian discipline' in areas such as defence, which is a specialty of the 'older generation' Italian coaches.

As for his son Paolo, an injury sustained last Wednesday night, in the recovery round of games where Milan were away to Atalanta, is not as bad as first thought.

Early reports had Maldini in doubt for the World Cup but now a two-month rest is all that appears to be needed. Maldini is Italy's captain and it will be his fourth World Cup. There are no greater defenders, or team leaders, than Maldini in the world game today. His is a vital member of Giovanni Trapattoni's plans and would have been sorely missed.

Italy and AC Milan are of course already suffering a long-term injury to Filippo Inzaghi. Maldini, like Inzaghi, didn't meet with any sort of foul play in the game. They both just slipped on their own and twisted their knees.

One has to raise some questions when injuries such as these occur. For instance, isn't the season far too long and demanding on professional footballers? Yes, I know they are paid in 'telephone number' amounts but is it realistic to expect football 12 months a year from them?

The domestic leagues are taxing enough, then throw in the European competitions which start in July and the Italian Cup which begins in August, and you start to see that the calendar is looking fairly full.

The season ends in late May/early June and then the World Cup gets under way shortly after. And, then it is back for pre-season training and training is at least two sessions per day for the whole year. What can we expect? Injuries and more injuries. FIFA really needs to standardise the football calendar and allow players some sort of break.

♦♦♦♦

Is a video referee necessary? This is the question that dominated the headlines in Italian football last week. The same linesman (or referee's assistant these days) disallowed two clear goals in two different games.

In Atalanta v Inter a few weeks ago and in Verona v Lazio recently, the said linesman, better known perhaps as 'blind Freddy', indicated that the ball had not crossed the goal line when video replays clearly indicated that it did.

Human error and part of the game one could argue. However, is it not the same human error that in a certain World Cup final in 1966 allowed a goal that perhaps never was?

That was over 35 years ago and we are still facing the same questions today. Technology could allow the referee to seek assistance on certain decisions, especially those that are deciding key issues, such as in Cricket, American Football or Rugby League.

The old argument is that this technology would, (a) disrupt the flow of the game and (b) not be fair because all junior games do not have access to this technology.

Firstly, as these other sports have proved, there is no disruption to the flow of the game and secondly, to compare top level soccer to junior soccer is just plain silly. In the other sports, do their juniors have a video referee?

Furthermore, at the highest level, where the technology is available and where millions of dollars are at stake, it should be used. At junior level you are lucky to have a referee sometimes or even a field to play on.

Video referees at the highest levels, such as the Serie A or a World Cup, are a must. It is one of the privileges of playing at such an elite level and anything less is simply 'bury the head in the sand' mentality.

Wishing every one of our *ABSW* readers and families a very Merry Christmas and I'll be writing this column from Europe over the next few weeks.

Argentinian forward Claudio Lopez of Lazio Rome beats Bologna goalkeeper Gianluca Pagliuca.

ROMA SILENCE CHIEVO

Champions AS Roma defeated Serie A dark horses Chievo 3-0 to grab provisional pole position in the Italian first division on Saturday.

Goals from Emerson, Walter Samuel and Damiano Tommasi ensured Roma prevailed in a match where both teams had a player sent off. The result was enough to lift Roma to the top.

However, Inter Milan will return to the summit if they beat Piacenza on Sunday in the last round of matches before the Christmas break.

It was a disappointing end to what has been a memorable year for Chievo who have astonished everyone in their debut top-flight campaign in which they topped the table for a total of seven calendar weeks and only lost that spot on Wednesday because their match with Lazio was postponed.

This was their fourth defeat of the season but their first real thrashing of the season - their other three setbacks had all finished 3-2.

In Saturday's other match Roma's arch-rivals Lazio threw away a 2-0 lead to end up tying the match 2-2 with Bologna at the Olympic Stadium.

Chievo started well at the Stadio Marc'Antonio Bentegodi and defender Lorenzo D'Anna clipped the outside of Francesco Antonioli's post with a header from Eugenio Corini's corner.

But Roma started to get on top and rack up the pressure on the side from Verona.

A header by Brazilian Emerson from Francesco Totti's corner forced a fine save from Cristiano Lupatelli, Antonioli's number two at Roma during the Scudetto-winning campaign before moving to Chievo in the summer.

Another corner resulted and Totti's delivery again found Emerson — this time the header found the corner of the net.

It was 1-0 at the interval but in the second period the game looked like it might swing Chievo's way.

Chievo playmaker Corini caught Roma off guard with a long ball to striker Massimo Marazzina who was fouled by Antonioli on the edge of the area.

Referee Graziano Cesari brandished the red card at the goalkeeper and awarded a freekick to the anger of both sets of players - Roma clearly felt the dismissal was harsh while Chievo were convinced the offence had occurred inside the area and merited a penalty.

Roma coach Fabio Capello brought on Ivan Pelizzoli who was bought as a first choice from Atalanta in the summer but has since lost his place again to Antonioli.

Corini's freekick was well saved by Pelizzoli.

But after 73 minutes Roma killed the match when Argentinian defender Walter Samuel scored the second goal.

Two minutes later Chievo's Brazilian winger Eriberto also saw red for what looked an innocuous foul on Emerson and that effectively ended Chievo's resistance.

Italian international Tommasi, booed throughout as he used to play for Chievo's arch-rivals Verona, added insult to injury with an injury-time strike.

Lazio threw away a golden opportunity for three points after dominating the early stages via two goals from Argentinian striker Claudio Lopez in the opening 34 minutes.

Lopez, only playing because Simone Inzaghi was injured, took his chances well but after 41 minutes it was another Argentinian - Bologna's Julio Cruz who got in on the scoring act to reduce arrears to 2-1.

The Roman side's task was made more difficult by the 66th-minute sending off of Yugoslav winger Dejan Stankovic and nine minutes later Bologna took full advantage when rookie defender Christian Zaccardo headed them level for his first Serie A goal.

Frenchman Jonathan Zebina (left) of AS Roma vies with Massimo Marazzina of Chievo Verona.

Chievo 0 Roma 3, Lazio 2 Bologna 2, Played on Sunday: Brescia v Juventus, Parma v Fiorentina, Milan v Verona, Perugia v Atalanta, Piacenza v Inter, Torino v Venezia, Udinese v Lecce

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Roma	16	9	6	1	24	9	33
Inter	15	9	4	2	28	14	31
Chievo	15	9	2	4	28	19	29
Juventus	15	6	7	2	23	13	25
Lazio	15	6	6	3	21	12	24
Milan	15	6	6	3	23	17	24
Bologna	16	7	3	6	13	15	24
Verona	15	6	4	5	21	22	22
Udinese	15	6	3	6	24	24	21
Atalanta	15	6	3	6	21	25	21
Piacenza	15	5	3	7	21	21	18
Brescia	15	4	6	5	19	24	18
Torino	15	4	5	6	17	20	17
Perugia	15	4	4	7	15	20	16
Lecce	15	3	5	7	17	24	14
Fiorentina	15	4	2	9	17	30	14
Parma	15	2	5	8	15	24	11
Venezia	15	1	4	10	10	24	7

NO GAMES IN THE SERIE A UNTIL JANUARY 6 2002

ENGLAND

Southampton's Paul Williams (left) attempts to stop Manchester Utd's Ole Gunnar Soljskaer.

Red-hot Newcastle

LEEDS UTD 3
NEWCASTLE UTD 4

Nolberto Solano fired a last-gasp winner as Newcastle United came from 3-1 down to beat Leeds 4-3 and stay top of the Premiership after a dramatic encounter at Elland Road.

He picked up on a pass from the inspirational Kieron Dyer, beat Ian Harte and fired the ball home to complete a remarkable comeback.

Craig Bellamy gave the away side the lead after 38 minutes, knocking the ball home after a fine break by Dyer, but their lead lasted less than a minute before Lee Bowyer slipped past Nikos Dabizas to slot home the equaliser on his return to the first team.

With Leeds rampant at the beginning of the second period, Mark Viduka curled home a second on 50 minutes and Ian Harte crashed a third six minutes later.

As the away side continued to press, Alan Shearer levelled from the penalty-spot on 71 minutes after Eirik Bakke was adjudged to have handled.

MANCHESTER UTD 6
SOUTHAMPTON 1

Manchester United continued their recent resurgence, Ruud van Nistelrooy hitting a hat-trick as they recorded their third Premiership victory in a row with a 6-1 win over Southampton.

The Dutchman latched onto Nicky Butt's cross to put the champions ahead after just 30 seconds – the fastest Premiership goal of the season – and added a second on 34 minutes as Southampton failed to clear a corner.

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer volleyed home from another corner to make it three seven minutes later, before Van Nistelrooy completed his hat-trick ten minutes after the restart.

A poor Fabian Barthez clearance gifted Marian Pahars a consolation a minute later, but further strikes from Roy Keane and Phil Neville completed the rout.

TOTTENHAM 1
IPSWICH 2

Teddy Sheringham was sent off as Tottenham Hotspur went down 2-1 at home to Ipswich Town.

He lashed out after John McGreal had tugged his shirt on 53 minutes, and was shown the red card by referee Mike Riley.

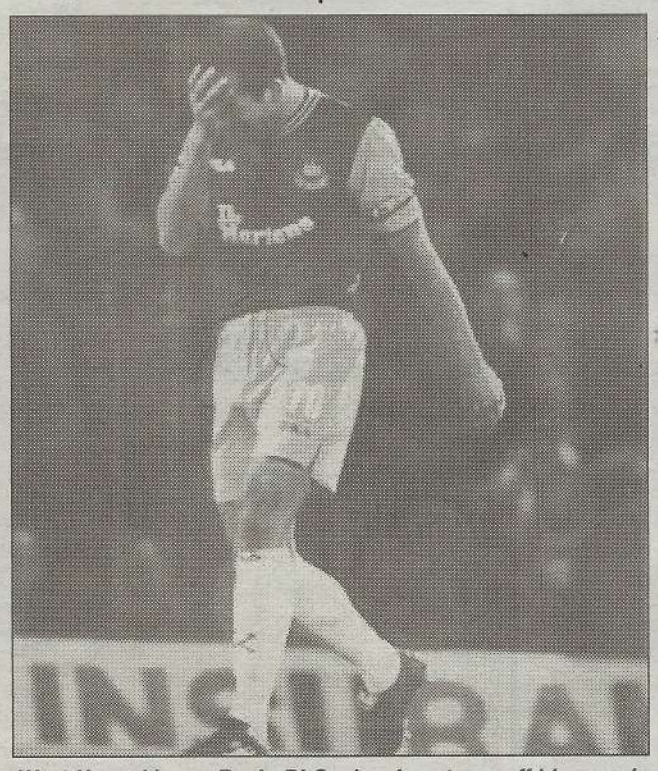
Wales midfielder Simon Davies celebrated agreeing a four year contract this week as he stretched to fire home Serhiy Rebrov's cross on 12 minutes to give Spurs the lead, but Finidi George grabbed an equaliser with a fine opportunist strike five minutes before the break.

Christian Ziege hit the post moments later, but it was Ipswich who grabbed the winner, Alun Armstrong flicking home Finidi's cross two minutes from time.

LEICESTER CITY 1
WESTHAM 1

Matt Elliott was also sent off, as Leicester City slipped to second bottom with a 1-1 draw against West Ham United.

Muzzy Izzet put the Foxes two minutes before half-time, firing home after David James had punched clear a corner, but when Joe Cole was tripped in the box by Elliott quarter of an hour from time, the Scotland centre-back was dismissed and Paulo di Canio chipped home the penalty.



West Ham skipper, Paolo Di Canio wipes tears off his eyes in the game against Leicester.

SUNDERLAND 1
EVERTON 0

Claudio Reyna marked his Sunderland debut with a goal as Peter Reid's side struggled to a 1-0 victory over Everton at a snow-bound Stadium of Light.

The USA captain side-footed home Jason McAteer's cross 13 minutes from time.

CHARLTON ATHLETIC 0
BLACKBURN ROVERS 2

Blackburn Rovers ended a run of three straight defeats with a 2-0 victory at Charlton Athletic, Damien Duff and David Dunn getting the goals in the second half.

DERBY COUNTY 3
ASTON VILLA 1

Benito Carbone got his first goal for Derby County as they beat Aston Villa 3-1.

Fabrizio Ravanelli put Derby ahead on 44 minutes, and, although Juan Pablo Angel levelled before the break, second half goals from Carbone and Malcolm Christie gave the home side all three points.

MIDDLESBROUGH
FULHAM - (Postponed)

THIS WEEK

(Wednesday, December 26)

Arsenal v Chelsea
West Ham v Derby
Aston Villa v Liverpool
Blackburn v Sunderland
Bolton v Leeds
Everton v Manchester Utd
Fulham v Charlton
Ipswich vs Leicester
Newcastle v Middlesbrough
Southampton v Leeds

(Saturday, December 29)

Arsenal v Middlesbrough
West Ham v Liverpool
Aston Villa v Tottenham
Blackburn v Derby
Bolton v Leicester
Everton v Charlton
Fulham v Manchester Utd
Ipswich v Sunderland
Newcastle v Chelsea
Southampton v Leeds

PREMIER DIVISION

Charlton Athletic 0 Blackburn Rovers 2, Leeds Utd 3 Newcastle Utd 4, Leicester City 1 West Ham 1, Sunderland 1 Everton 0, Tottenham Hotspur 1 Ipswich Town 2, Manchester Utd 6 Southampton 1 Derby County 3 Aston Villa 1, Middlesbrough v Fulham - postponed. Chelsea v Bolton Wanderers, Liverpool v Arsenal.

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Newcastle United	**18**	**11**	**3**	**4**	**34**	**23**	**36**
Liverpool	16	10	3	3	25	15	33
Leeds United	18	8	8	2	26	17	32
Manchester Utd	18	9	3	6	43	28	30
Arsenal	17	8	6	3	35	21	30
Chelsea	17	6	9	2	23	12	27
Tottenham Hotspur	18	8	3	7	30	25	27
Aston Villa	18	7	6	5	24	22	27
Everton	18	6	5	7	23	23	23
Fulham	17	5	8	4	17	17	23
Sunderland	18	6	5	7	14	17	23
Blackburn Rovers	18	5	7	6	25	21	22
Charlton Athletic	18	5	7	6	21	22	22
Bolton Wanderers	17	5	6	6	20	21	21
West Ham United	18	5	6	7	20	30	21
Middlesbrough	17	5	4	8	17	23	19
Southampton	17	5	1	11	18	30	16
Derby County	18	4	4	10	14	31	16
Leicester City	18	3	6	9	12	32	15
Ipswich Town	18	2	6	10	17	28	12

DIVISION ONE

Barnsley 4 Gillingham 1 , Birmingham 1 Walsall 0, Burnley 0 Millwall 0 , Norwich 2 Wimbledon 0, Portsmouth 2 Stockport 0, Preston 0 Grimsby 0, Sheffield United 2 Rotherham 2, Watford 1 Wolverhampton 1, West Brom 1 Sheffield Wednesday 1, Postponed: Crewe v Manchester City.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Burnley	**25**	**15**	**5**	**5**	**48**	**33**	**50**
Wolverhampton	25	13	7	5	37	20	46
Manchester City	24	14	3	7	55	34	45
Norwich City	25	14	3	8	35	33	45
West Bromwich	25	13	4	8	28	21	43
Millwall	24	11	6	7	39	28	39
Birmingham City	25	11	6	8	39	31	39
Crystal Palace	25	12	2	11	46	36	38
Preston	25	9	10	6	39	31	37
Coventry City	24	11	4	9	27	24	37
Watford	24	10	6	8	37	27	36
Portsmouth	25	10	6	9	38	36	36
Gillingham	25	9	6	10	37	37	33
Wimbledon	25	8	8	9	40	39	32
Bradford City	24	9	5	10	44	44	32
Sheffield Utd	25	7	11	7	28	30	32
Nottingham Forest	25	7	10	8	27	25	31
Rotherham Utd	25	7	8	10	32	39	29
Crewe	24	7	8	9	25	37	29
Barnsley	25	6	7	12	35	50	25
Sheffield Wed.	25	5	9	11	27	39	24
Walsall	25	6	5	14	28	41	23
Grimsby Town	25	5	7	13	22	46	22
Stockport	25	2	6	17	24	56	12

SECOND DIVISION

Bournemouth 1 QPR 2 , Bristol City 1 Wrexham 0, Bury 1 Blackpool 1, Colchester 3 Huddersfield 3, Reading 1 Wigan 1 , Wycombe 2 Cambridge 0, Postponed: Peterborough v Tranmere

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Brentford	**23**	**13**	**6**	**4**	**46**	**25**	**45**
Stoke City	22	13	5	4	35	19	44
Bristol City	24	13	5	6	38	23	44
Brighton	22	12	8	2	32	17	44
Reading	22	12	3	7	31	22	39
Wycome Wanderers	23	10	8	5	35	28	38
Cardiff City	23	9	10	4	35	25	37
Q.P.R.	23	10	6	7	34	27	36
Tranmere Rovers	22	10	5	7	42	32	35
Huddersfield	22	9	7	6	34	26	34
Oldham Athletic	23	8	9	6	38	29	33
Colchester Utd	23	9	5	9	38	37	32
Blackpool	23	7	9	7	30	35	30
Wigan Athletic	23	7	7	9	33	30	28
Peterborough Utd	21	8	3	10	30	29	27
Swindon Town	22	7	6	9	23	31	27
Bournemouth	23	7	5	11	26	34	26
Chesterfield	23	6	7	10	28	32	25
Bury	23	7	4	12	24	38	25
Port Vale	23	6	6	11	26	33	24
Notts County	23	5	8	10	30	39	23
Wrexham	24	5	4	15	27	54	19
Northampton Town	23	5	2	16	21	45	17
Cambridge Utd	23	3	6	14	21	47	15

Spanish Primera Liga

La Coruna Go Top

Deportivo La Coruna returned to lead the Spanish first division over the weekend , after a gap of nearly a month, following their 2-0 victory over fellow title challengers Real Betis on Saturday.

The Galicians started the day in fourth place but rocketed back to the top thanks to goals from Roy Makaay and Sergio Gonzalez. Deportivo have 33 points from 18 games and a two-point lead over second-placed Celta Vigo, who won 1-0 away at Sevilla on Saturday.

However Real Madrid, the defending Spanish champions, lie in third place with 31 points, have played a game less and will face Real Mallorca on Sunday.

"I hope we are the leaders for more than 24 hours but we will have to wait and see," said Deportivo coach Javier Irureta, in his usual realistic style.

Makaay got Deportivo off to the perfect start firing home a Fran Gonzalez pass after just eight minutes for his sixth goal of the season.

However, the home side had to wait until 71 minutes before they clinched the game.p

Sergio headed Deportivo's second goal, the Spanish international midfielder connecting with a cross from Victor Sanchez. "Betis created a lot of problems for us until the second goal but after that we could relax a little," added Irureta.

Celta moved up to second place with only their second away win of the season, the deciding goal in their 1-0 win at Sevilla coming from their Brazilian-born Spanish international striker Catanha.

Catanha grabbed his ninth goal of the season after 58 minutes, pouncing on the rebound after the Sevilla goalkeeper Antonio Notario had saved his penalty. Sevilla should have had a share of the points but their teenage striker Jose Antonio Reyes missed an open goal 18 minutes from the end.

Real Sociedad have not had much to celebrate this season but the struggling Basques at least ended the year on a high note by thrashing Valladolid 6-0.

The victory was the biggest in the Spanish top flight for 14 months, since Sociedad themselves went down 6-0 to Barcelona in October 2000.

Xabi Alonso headed the hosts into the lead after 35 minutes but three goals in nine minutes, early in the second half, sealed the victory. Russian international Dimitri Khokhlov got the second goal after 51 minutes and then turned provider for Oscar De Paula to poke the ball into the net five minutes later.

Khokhlov again supplied, this time for Tayfun Korkut to score on the hour, and the rout was completed with goals in the last five minutes from Luiz Alberto and Tayfun.

Real Sociedad coach John Toshack decided to throw Sander Westerveld in at the deep end but the Dutch international goalkeeper, signed just a week ago from English Premiership side Liverpoool, was flawless under early fire from Valladolid, before the goals started flowing.

The gloom that has surrounded Toshack in recent months visibly lifted in the post-match press conference. "There is still a lot of work to do before we can say we are out of trouble, but if we stay patient I am sure we can do it," said the Welshman.

Nevertheless, despite the memorable victory, Real Sociedad remain in the relegation zone.

Espanyol took all three points from the local derby in the Catalan capital, winning 2-0 over their richer, and more famous, neighbours Barcelona.

Raul Tamudo got both the Espanyol goals and there will be long and hard recriminations at Barcelona over the manner of his first strike after 56 minutes.

Barcelona's Dutch international defender Frank de Boer provided a dreadful back pass which left goalkeeper Roberto Bonano chasing the ball to boot it away.

However, Bonano miscued his shot and the ball bounced off the body of the chasing Tamudo and into the net. Tamudo's second goal came in more conventional fashion, heading home a corner after 72 minutes.

Valencia came back from a goal down against Malaga to win 2-1 and maintain their unbeaten home record.

Malaga's Uruguayan striker Dario Silva opened the scoring after 14 minutes only for Valencia's Vicente Rodriguez and Mista Ferrer to get two goals within four minutes shortly afterwards.

FC Barcelona Argentinian forward Javier Saviola (left) vies with Roger Garcia (centre) and Morales Cuerva (right) of Espanol.

THIS WEEKEND

(Sunday, December 6)

Barcelona vs Real Zaragoza
Villarreal vs Sevilla
Celta Vigo vs Rayo Vallecano
Alaves vs Osasuna
Athletic Bilbao vs Tenerife
Las Palmas vs Real Sociedad
Valladolid vs Mallorca
Real Madrid vs Deportivo Coruna
Betis Sevilla vs Valencia
Malaga vs Espanyol

Deportivo La Coruna's Juan Carlos Valeron (right) vies with Antonio Alvarez "Ito" of Real Betis.

Tenerife 1 Las Palmas 3, Espanyol 2 Barcelona 0, Valencia 2 Malaga 1, Sevilia 0 Celta 1, Deportivo 2 Betis 0, Real Sociedad 6 Valladolid 0, Zaragoza v Villarreal, Rayo Vallecano v Alaves, Mallorca v Real, Osasuna v Atletic.

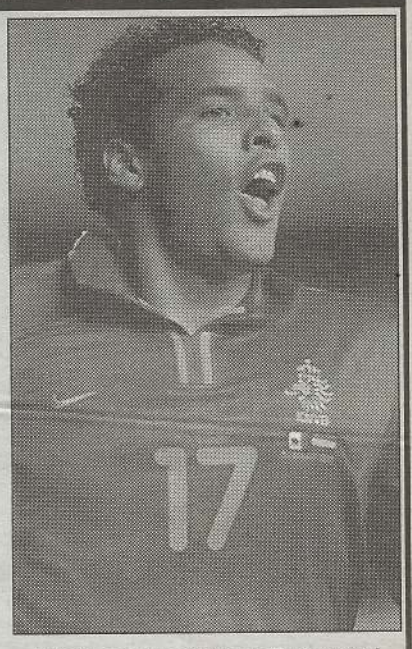
	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Deportivo	**18**	**10**	**3**	**5**	**32**	**22**	**33**
Celta	18	8	7	3	34	20	31
Real	17	9	4	4	32	20	31
Betis	18	9	4	5	19	15	31
Alaves	17	9	3	5	19	10	30
Valencia	18	7	9	2	20	15	30
Atletic	17	7	7	3	25	23	28
Barcelona	18	7	6	5	25	17	27
Sevilia	18	6	6	6	27	22	24
Espanyol	18	7	3	8	24	29	24
Las Palmas	18	6	5	7	20	16	23
Villarreal	17	6	4	7	17	17	22
Valladolid	18	6	4	8	18	32	22
Malaga	18	5	6	7	20	24	21
Zaragoza	17	6	2	9	15	23	20
Mallorca	17	5	4	8	17	23	19
Osasuna	17	5	4	8	15	23	19
Real Sociedad	18	5	3	10	23	27	18
Tenerife	18	5	3	10	12	22	18
Rayo Vallecano	17	3	3	11	16	30	12

WORLD LEAGUES

DUTCH EREDIVISIE

Vitesse 1 RKC 1, NAC 2 Heerenveen 1, PSV 8 Groningen 0, Willem II 3 Twente 3, Sparta v AZ - postponed, Utrecht v Ajax, NEC v Roda, De Graafschap v Feyenoord.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ajax	**17**	**11**	**3**	**3**	**41**	**20**	**36**
Feyenoord	17	11	2	4	38	14	35
PSV	19	10	4	5	40	23	34
NAC	19	10	4	5	35	28	34
Heerenveen	19	9	5	5	32	15	32
Vitesse	19	8	6	5	21	21	30
Utrecht	18	8	5	5	37	26	29
RKC	19	8	4	7	27	21	28
Den Bosch	18	5	7	6	28	27	22
Willem II	19	4	10	5	30	32	22
NEC	18	6	4	8	14	30	22
Twente	19	4	9	6	23	27	21
AZ	18	6	3	9	19	23	21
Roda	18	5	4	9	18	26	19
Sparta	18	4	7	7	18	34	19
Groningen	19	5	4	10	20	39	19
De Graafschap	18	5	3	10	22	33	18
Fortuna	18	2	4	12	19	43	10



Pierre van Hooijdonk: Feyenoord striker.

BELGIAN EERSTKLASSE

Giles de Bilde: On target for Anderlecht.

Westerlo 1 Standard 2, Anderlecht 1 Brugge 0, Antwerp 0 La Louviere 0, Lokeren 2 Genk 2, Charleroi 1 Germinal 0, Westerlo 5 Lierse 4, Sint-Truiden 3 Aalst 1, RWDM 0 Gent 1, Standart 2 Lommel 1, Mouscron 1 Brugge 4, Beveren 2 Anderlecht 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Brugge	**17**	**12**	**1**	**4**	**38**	**19**	**37**
Standard	17	11	4	2	32	18	37
Genk	17	10	6	1	48	23	36
Gent	17	11	3	3	32	21	36
Anderlecht	17	10	5	2	36	18	35
Lokeren	17	8	5	4	25	17	29
Germinal	17	7	5	5	35	24	26
Sint-Truiden	17	6	4	7	26	27	22
Charleroi	17	6	3	8	15	29	21
Mouscron	17	6	1	10	29	28	19
Westerlo	17	5	3	9	28	32	18
Lommel	17	4	6	7	28	36	18
Aalst	17	5	3	9	18	35	18
Lierse	17	4	5	8	25	29	17
RWDM	17	5	2	10	23	32	17
Antwerp	17	4	4	9	22	29	16
La Louviere	17	3	5	9	20	36	14
Beveren	17	1	5	11	16	43	8

PORTUGUESE FIRST DIVISION

Braga 2 Belenenses 3, Farense 0 Uniao Leiria 1, Salgueiros 3 Gil Vicente 0, Maritimo 1 Varzim 1, Santa Clara 2 Porto 1, Vitoria Guimaraes 2 Alverca 0, Pacos Ferreira 0 Beira Mar 0, Sporting 1 Vitoria Setubal 0; Boavista v Benfica.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sporting	**16**	**10**	**3**	**3**	**36**	**12**	**33**
Porto	16	9	2	5	28	14	29
Boavista	15	9	2	4	26	12	29
Benfica	15	7	7	1	25	16	28
Uniao Leiria	16	7	6	3	28	14	27
Belenenses	16	8	3	5	24	23	27
Vitoria Guimaraes	16	7	4	5	18	16	25
Maritimo	16	7	1	8	20	19	22
Santa Clara	16	6	4	6	14	19	22
Pacos Ferreira	16	5	6	5	20	25	21
Braga	16	5	5	6	20	15	20
Salgueiros	16	6	2	8	17	33	20
Beira Mar	16	4	6	6	26	26	18
Gil Vicente	16	5	3	8	18	28	18
Vitoria Setubal	16	4	4	8	18	20	16
Alverca	16	4	3	9	19	31	15
Farense	16	4	3	9	11	23	15
Varzim	16	2	4	10	11	33	10

Sporting Lisbon's forward Joao Pinto (left) is held back by Vitoria de Setubal's Costa.

WORLD

SCOTTISH PREMIER LEAGUE

CELTIC BEATEN

Runaway Scottish Premier League leaders Celtic crashed to their first league defeat of the season Saturday, going down 2-0 at Aberdeen.

A controversial second-half penalty, coolly converted by veteran Robbie Winters, and a horrendous howler by keeper Robert Douglas settled a hard-fought match at wintry Pittodrie.

The spot-kick was given against Celtic striker John Hartson, who handled a bouncing ball when back helping out his defence. Aberdeen even had centre-back Derek Whyte sent off four minutes from time but held out under a barrage of Celtic attacks.

And in injury-time, a harmless back-pass was miscontrolled by Douglas and Darren Mackie robbed him to roll the ball into an empty net.

Rangers kept their slim title hopes alive thanks to a 3-2 win at Ibrox over Dundee United, giving Alex McLeish his first win in charge of the club in his first home game.

The home side opened the scoring in the 21st minute. Georgian international striker Shota Arveladze collected Ronald de Boer's defence-splitting pass before smashing the ball low into the bottom corner of the net.

However, United fought back to level the scores eight minutes later, Steven Thompson tucking home the equalizer after good work from Jim Lauchlan.

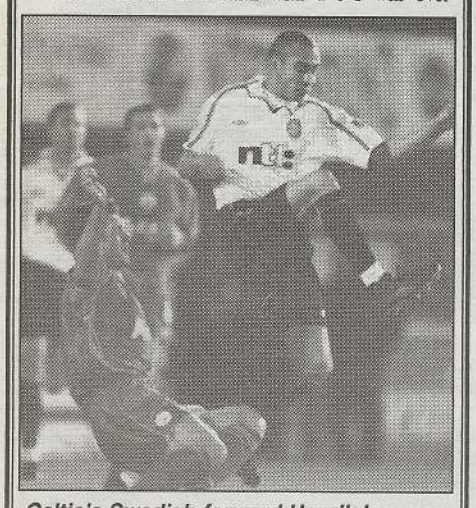
But Rangers restored their lead a minute from half-time when Italian defender Lorenzo Amoruso rose high to head in Fernando Ricksen's cross.

It seemed that Rangers had made it safe when Arveladze blasted home from just inside the box 10 minutes after the interval, but Thompson's second goal of the contest gave the home side several anxious moments.

Livingston failed to keep pace with Rangers after being held to a 0-0 draw at home to struggling Dunfermline.

Bottom side St Johnstone earned a point at home to Hibernian in another goalless draw.

Hearts moved into sixth with a 3-1 win over



Celtic's Swedish forward Henrik Larsson (right) and Derek Whyte of Aberdeen go for the ball.

Motherwell, despite going a goal down. Stuart Elliott opened the scoring on 20 minutes, taking advantage of a poor backpass by Thomas Flogel.

But three goals in the second half from Ricardo Fuller (twice) and Kevin McKenna, gave Hearts all three points.

Kilmarnock kept their good run of form going with an excellent 2-1 win at Dundee. Ally Mitchell got Kilmarnock off to a perfect start in the 21st minute as his volley whistled into the top corner.

Although Gavin Rae pounced on a rebound to equalise three minutes into the second half, Stephen Murray snatched the winner for Kilmarnock.

Aberdeen 2 Celtic 0, St. Johnstone 0 Hibernian 0, Dundee 1 Kilmarnock 2, Hearts 3 Motherwell 1, Livingston 0 Dunfermline 0, Rangers 3 Dundee United 2.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Celtic	**19**	**17**	**1**	**1**	**44**	**9**	**52**
Rangers	20	12	6	2	45	17	42
Livingston	19	10	7	2	28	13	37
Aberdeen	20	10	3	7	31	28	33
Kilmarnock	20	8	3	9	22	24	27
Hearts	20	7	3	10	26	27	24
Dundee	20	6	5	9	20	30	23
Dundee Utd	20	5	7	8	22	35	22
Hibernian	20	5	6	9	26	30	21
Dunfermline	20	6	3	11	23	37	21
Motherwell	20	4	6	10	24	39	18
St. Johnstone	20	2	4	14	13	35	10

FRENCH CUP

Paris Saint Germain's Nigerian Augustin Okocha (rights) fights for the ball with Sochaux Benoet Pedretti.

PSG WIN DESPITE ANELKA

Paris Saint Germain proved they can function without the services of temperamental striker Nicolas Anelka when they clinched an impressive 2-0 win at Sochaux.

However for the more sympathetic followers of football the best story of the night was Nantes' 1-0 win against Troyes, giving the stricken French champions a lifeline and perhaps saving Raynald Denoueix his job. Elsewhere former France international Didier Deschamps, now coach at Monaco, was also smiling as his side beat Rennes 3-1 to register their first league win since October 27.

Goals from Laurent Leroy and Nigerian teenager Bartholomew Ogbeche towards the end of the first half were enough to settle the matter and put PSG into fifth place in the table - a day after Anelka had joined English giants Liverpool on loan until the end of the season. However, the match at Sochaux threatened to become a marathon affair after three power failures left the ground in darkness - stoppages of 23 minutes in total did nothing for the nerves of PSG coach Luiz Fernandez whose side were 2-0 ahead at the time of the first interruption. "These things make the players tired, they make mistakes and they pay for it with yellow and red cards," fumed Fernandez referring to the stoppages which happened after an hour of play when PSG were already 2-0 ahead.

Before then the matches between Metz and Montpellier, Auxerre and Lorient and Lyon against Bastia were postponed because of frozen pitches while the game between Lille and Bordeaux was called-off because of snow.

Nantes did their morale a power of good prior to the Xmas break with Romanian Viorel Moldovan gifting the 'Canaries' an 85th-minute goal which lifts Denoueix's men off the bottom of the table, although Lorient have a game in hand.

However after a match which could have gone either way it was left to Moldovan to settle the encounter with a freekick which he fired into the top corner with five minutes remaining.

At Monaco the scoring came much earlier as birthday boy Souleymane Camara, 20 years old on Saturday, popped up to head home a loose ball that had been badly cleared by Rennes 'keeper Fabien Debec. It was the 19-year-old's first goal in the French league. Monaco have come under heavy fire for their string of poor results of late, but on this occasion Deschamps' side came good with Burundi international Shabani Nonda coming close with a shot just before the break.

A subsequent penalty award for a foul on Camara by 'keeper Debec was then missed by Nonda two minutes before the interval.

The hosts did not come back into the match until halfway through the second period, with Nonda latching on to a ball supplied by Camara to fire home for Monaco's second on 67.

Rennes hit back through Frederic Piquionne with 10 minutes to play but Monaco scored a third through Pontus Farnerud in injury time to put the match beyond reach.

In Saturday's only other league match Guingamp lost 2-1 at home to Sedan who had Senegalese midfielder Henri Camara to thank for a brace of goals, on 77 and 85 minutes, for the last-gasp win. On Friday, Lens extended their lead at the top of the table to eight points when they beat Marseille 2-1.

Nantes 1 Troyes 0, Guingamp 1 Sedan 2, Monaco 3 Rennais 1, Sochaux 0 Paris Saint Germain 2, Olympique M. 1 Lens 2, Auxerre v Lorient -postponed, Lille v Bordeaux - postponed, Lyon, v Bastia - postponed, Metz v Montpellier -postponed.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lens	**19**	**12**	**5**	**2**	**35**	**14**	**41**
Lyon	18	10	3	5	33	18	33
Auxerre	18	9	6	3	26	18	33
Lille	18	9	6	3	25	17	33
PSG	19	7	10	2	22	13	31
Bordeaux	18	7	7	4	15	10	28
Sochaux	19	7	6	6	27	24	27
Troyes	18	7	4	7	21	21	25
Marseille	19	5	8	6	17	17	23
Montpellier	17	5	7	5	17	15	22
Sedan	19	5	7	7	22	22	22
Bastia	18	7	1	10	20	27	22
Monaco	18	5	5	8	19	21	20
Rennais	19	5	5	9	18	29	20
Guingamp	19	5	5	9	16	31	20
Metz	17	5	2	10	9	18	17
Nantes	19	4	4	11	14	28	16
Lorient	18	4	3	11	27	40	15

GERMAN BUNDESLIGA

LEVERKUSSEN MISS GREAT CHANCE

Bayer Leverkusen missed the opportunity to go into the winter-break with a three-point Bundesliga lead when they were beaten 3-1 at Wolfsburg on Wednesday.

Klaus Toppmoller's side travelled without Jens Nowotny, Lucio, Michael Ballack, Yildiray Basturk and Bernd Schneider - and struggled to cope with their industrious opponents. Wolfsburg looked the hungrier of the sides from the start and took the lead through former Leverkusen player Robson Ponte, who fired home five minutes before the break.

The visitors pushed forward in search of an equaliser after the interval, but were punished by Croatian striker Tomislav Maric, who doubled his team's lead in the 56th minute.

In-form Maric sealed the win with his second goal of the game in the 76th minute, before Oliver Neuville netted a consolation in the dying stages.

Kaiserslautern also lost ground in the title race as they were beaten 3-1 at home by 1860 Munich.

The game came to life in the 57th minute when Germany star Miroslav Klose took advantage of an error by Lions keeper Simon Jentzsch to put the home side ahead.

1860 looked to be heading for certain defeat when Uwe Ehlers was shown a red card on the hour. But Andreas Brehme's team took their foot off the pedal and were duly punished as the visitors struck three goals in the last 20 minutes.

Thomas Hassler's penalty brought the ten men level in the 70th minute, before late goals from Martin Max and Michael Wiesinger won the game.

Schalke 04 secured a 3-1 win at Hansa Rostock. The Royal Blues - reeling from coach Huub Stevens' decision to quit at the end of the season - were not lacking in motivation as they closed the gap on the leading pack.

Belgium captain Marc Wilmots netted twice, while Danish star Ebbe Sand was also on target. Oswald netted the only goal for Hansa.

FC Cologne were held to a goalless draw at home to Stuttgart.

Schalke's Marc Wilmolts (right) takes the ball off Rostock's Mohamed Emara.

Bayern Munich 0 Borussia Monchengladbach 0, Hertha Berlin 2 St Pauli 2, FC Nuremberg 2 Borussia Dortmund 2, Hamburg 5 Energie Cottbus 2, Werder Bremen 3 Freiburg 2, FC Cologne 0 Stuttgart 0, Hansa Rostock 1 Schalke 04 3, Kaiserslautern 1 1860 Munich 3, Wolfsburg 3 Bayer Leverkusen 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bayer Lever.	**18**	**12**	**3**	**3**	**44**	**24**	**39**
Borussia Dort.	18	12	3	3	30	18	39
Werder Bremen	18	11	3	4	31	19	36
Kaiserslautern	18	11	2	5	38	25	35
Bayern Munich	18	10	4	4	34	11	34
Hertha Berlin	18	9	5	4	29	22	32
Schalke 04	18	8	5	5	23	21	29
1860 Munich	18	8	3	7	26	30	27
Wolfsburg	18	7	4	7	32	26	25
Stuttgart	18	6	7	5	20	18	25
Hamburg	18	5	5	8	25	29	20
Hansa Rostock	18	5	4	9	17	25	19
Freiburg	18	4	6	8	22	30	18
Borussia M'bach	18	3	8	7	19	26	17
FC Cologne	18	3	5	10	11	28	14
Energie Cottbus	18	3	5	10	15	33	14
FC Nuremberg	18	3	4	11	14	33	13
St Pauli	18	1	6	11	18	36	9

WORLD LEAGUES

N. IRELAND FIRST DIVISION

Linfield 4 Newry 0, Crusaders 1 Portadown 2, Coleraine 4 Cliftonville 2, Omagh 1 Ards 1, Glenavon 1 Glentoran 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Glentoran	**19**	**12**	**6**	**1**	**32**	**8**	**42**
Portadown	19	12	3	4	44	22	39
Coleraine	20	11	2	7	31	29	35
Linfield	20	10	4	6	35	17	34
Omagh	20	8	7	5	29	27	31
Cliftonville	19	5	7	7	20	23	22
Glenavon	20	5	7	8	23	30	22
Newry	20	3	9	8	22	34	18
Ards	19	3	5	11	16	38	14
Crusaders	20	2	4	14	17	41	10

WALES FIRST DIVISION

Oswestry Town 0 Newtown 0, Rhayader Town 0 Cwmbran 3, Caernarfon Town 4 Aberystwyth Town 1, Connah's Quay 0 Llanelli 6, Haverfordwest 2 Bangor City 4, Carmarthen Town 1 Rhyl 0, Flexsys Cefn Druids 0 Barry Town 2, Caersws 1 TNS Llansantffraid 2.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Llansantffraid	**15**	**9**	**4**	**2**	**32**	**16**	**31**
Connah's Quay	15	9	3	3	34	26	30
Bangor City	14	8	3	3	31	16	27
Barry Town	14	7	5	2	30	11	26
Cwmbran Town	12	8	0	4	26	15	24
Carmarthen Town	14	7	3	4	22	15	24
Rhyl	15	7	2	6	24	19	23
Caernarfon Town	15	6	4	5	29	28	22
Aberystwyth Town	12	6	1	5	18	18	19
Newtown	15	4	6	5	20	24	18
Afan Lido	13	5	2	6	14	19	17
Caersws	15	4	3	8	27	27	15
Haverfordwest	13	3	5	5	23	27	14
Port Talbot	12	4	2	6	17	23	14
Oswestry Town	14	4	2	8	15	31	14
Llanelli	14	4	1	9	14	22	13
Flexsys Cefn Druids	14	3	3	8	22	38	12
Rhayader Town	14	1	3	10	8	31	6

TURKISH FIRST DIVISION

Besiktas 3 Gaziantepspor 1, Kocaelispor 2 Denizlispor 1, Ankaragucu 1 Rizespor 1, Istanbulspor 4 Antalyaspor 1, Bursaspor 0 Genclerbirligi SK 1, Malatyaspor 1 Samsunspor 3, Trabzonspor 3 Goztepe 0, Yozgatspor v Galatasaray SK - postponed, Diyarbakirspor 2 Fenerbahce 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Besiktas	**17**	**11**	**3**	**3**	**45**	**23**	**36**
Galatasaray SK	15	11	2	2	38	19	35
Fenerbahce	18	11	1	6	37	21	34
Istanbulspor	17	9	3	5	19	15	30
Gaziantepspor	16	8	4	4	24	16	28
Ankaragucu	17	8	3	6	40	28	27
Bursaspor	17	8	2	7	22	26	26
Trabzonspor	17	7	4	6	28	21	25
Kocaelispor	16	7	4	5	23	21	25
Diyarbakirspor	18	7	3	8	30	34	24
Goztepe	17	5	5	7	13	30	20
Rizespor	17	4	7	6	20	22	19
Denizlispor	17	4	6	7	30	25	18
Samsunspor	17	5	3	9	16	26	18
Antalyaspor	17	4	5	8	24	39	17
Yozgatspor	16	4	3	9	21	29	15
Genclerbirligi	16	2	6	8	23	34	12
Malatyaspor	17	4	0	13	14	37	12

NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

After Round 12	TOTAL								HOME						AWAY					
	P	W	D	L	BYE	F	A	PTS	P	W	D	L	F	A	P	W	D	L	F	A
PERTH GLORY	11	9	1	1	1	28	8	28	5	5	0	0	12	3	6	4	1	1	16	7
NEWCASTLE UNITED	12	6	6	0	—	17	9	24	6	4	2	0	8	2	6	2	4	0	9	7
BRISBANE STRIKERS	11	6	4	1	1	17	9	22	6	3	2	1	8	5	5	3	4	0	9	4
OLYMPIC SHARKS	11	5	2	4	1	12	8	17	7	4	2	1	9	3	4	1	0	3	3	3
MELBOURNE KNIGHTS	11	4	1	6	1	13	18	16	4	1	1	2	4	7	6	2	0	4	8	11
MARCONI STALLIONS	11	4	3	4	1	13	14	15	4	2	1	1	7	6	7	2	2	3	6	8
NORTHERN SPIRIT	11	4	3	4	1	17	19	15	6	1	1	4	6	13	5	3	2	0	11	6
PARRAMATTA POWER	11	4	3	4	1	14	14	15	6	3	1	2	9	8	5	1	2	2	5	6
SYDNEY UNITED	11	3	1	7	1	9	16	10	5	1	1	3	5	9	6	3	0	3	4	5
ADELAIDE CITY	11	2	4	5	1	15	16	10	6	2	3	1	12	7	5	0	1	4	3	9
SOUTH MELBOURNE	11	2	3	6	1	7	12	9	9	2	2	5	7	11	2	0	1	1	0	1
WOLLONGONG WOLVES	11	2	3	6	1	11	19	9	5	1	0	4	3	7	6	1	1	4	7	12
KINGZ FC	11	1	4	6	1	17	29	6	4	0	2	2	6	12	7	0	2	5	11	19

ADELAIDE CITY FORCE 3
(Brain 16, Tunbridge 19, 53)
FOOTBALL KINGZ 0

Venue: Hindmarsh Stadium. **Crowd:** 2,607. **Referee:** P. Green.
Cautions: Goutzioulis (FK) 38, Vidmar (ACF) 74.

Teams: ADELAIDE CITY FORCE: Cagalj, Fyfe, Kovacevic, Brain (Pantelis 64), Veart, Vidmar, Moreira, Tunbridge, Rees, Goulding (Pellegrino 83), Karlovic (Budin 83).
FOOTBALL KINGZ: Theoklitos, Osman, Goutzioulis, Davis (Eeson 69), Urlovic, Vlahos, Burton, Miyazawa, Van Steeden (Markovski 46), Wylie (Banks 62), Jackson.

NORTHERN SPIRIT 3
(Cervinski 25, McDermott 37, Burgess 85)
MELBOURNE KNIGHTS 5
(Porter 14, 32 & 38, Vargas 60, De Jesus 82pen)

Venue: North Sydney Oval. **Crowd:** 3,077. **Referee:** C Diomis.
Cautions: Horvat (MK) 31, Griffiths (NS) 44, Bell (NS) 66, John (MK) 76, Cartwright (NS) 77, Acevski (NS) 82.

Teams: NORTHERN SPIRIT: Acevski, Watts, Bell, Spencer (Cartwright 68), Trajkovski (Burgess 68), Thomas, McDermott, Foster, Cervinski, Enes (Hutchinson 59), Griffiths.
MELBOURNE KNIGHTS: John, Rajher (Marth 90), R Vargas, Ognenovski, Horvat, Vasilevski, Porter, Jolic, A Vargas, Tricario (Sulemani 11), De Jesus.

SOUTH MELBOURNE 1
(Buljan 9)
WOLLONGONG WOLVES 3
(Castro 55, Mennillo 82, Reid 91+)

Venue: Bob Jane Stadium. **Crowd:** 3,826. **Referee:** A. Nardi.
Cautions: Cervinski (WW) 2, Ceccoli (WW) 57, Durakovic (SM) 74, Bacak (SM) 74, Liparoti (SM) 79.

Teams: SOUTH MELBOURNE: Petkovic, Iosifidis (Petrovic 71), DeAmicis, Durakovic, Liparoti, Panopoulos (Pace 89), Buljan, Bacak (Lia 84), R. Sekulovski, Tolios, Murdocca.
WOLLONGONG WOLVES: Anastasiadis, Ceccoli, Cervinski, Castro, Reid, N. Sekulovski, Huxley, Blake, Anthopoulos, Mennillo, Sharland (Young 80).

OLYMPIC SHARKS 3
(Pondeljak 5, Deans og, 26, Carle 89)
PERTH GLORY 1
(Despotovski 15)

Venue: Toyota Park. **Crowd:** 5,831. **Referee:** M Breeze.
Red Cards: Deans (PG) 54.

Teams: OLYMPIC SHARK: Bolton, Kohler, Wilson, Pondeljak, Halpin, North, Harris (Demourtzidis 79), Carle (Caravella 95+), Packer, Durante (Moore 89), Juric.
PERTH GLORY: Petkovic, Horsley, Harnwell (Tarka 92+), Deans, Miller, Despotovski, Garcia (Edwards 75), Junior, Mori, Faria (Maloney 62), Pryce.

BRISBANE STRIKERS 2
(Rech 28 & 32)
MARCONI STALLIONS 0

Venue: Ballymore. **Crowd:** 3,391. **Referee:** E Lennie.
Cautions: Costanzo (MS) 22, Maisano (64).
Red Cards: McKain (BS) 68.

Teams: BRISBANE STRIKERS: Kearton, Alagich, Stefanutto, McKain, McLaren, Grierson, Rech, Foster (Baird 68), Trajanovski, Carbone (Dreger 80), McQuilter (Heath 45).
MARCONI STALLIONS: Turnbull, Babic, Costanzo, Longo, Renaud, Last (Beauchamp 68), Gulessarian (Brosque 25), Maisano, Tome, Bozinovski, Webb (Care 68).

NEWCASTLE UNITED 2
(Griffiths 59, McBreen 86)
SYDNEY UNITED 0

Venue: Energy Australia Stad. **Crowd:** 9,136. **Referee:** S Micallef.
Cautions: Savoca (SU) 9, Genc (SU) 86.

Teams: NEWCASTLE UNITED: Beltrame, Roberts, Zoricich, Bingley, Dodd (Johnson 87), Wilson, Griffiths, Tsekenis, Baillie, Masi (McBreen 83), Middleby.
SYDNEY UNITED: Knezevic, Savoca, Arrarte, Cunico, Marusic (Deur 35), Milicic, Kopic (Menapi 66), Talevski (Genc 81), Bilokapic, Stergiopoulos, Zelic.

BYE — PARRAMATTA POWER

PLAYER OF THE WEEK

Joel Porter: Melbourne Knights' industrious and ever-hungry striker bagged a first half hat-trick en route to a 5-3 victory.

ROUND 13

FRIDAY JANUARY 4 2002

W'gong Wolves vs Northern Spirit
Kingz FC vs Olympic Sharks

SATURDAY JANUARY 5 2002

Perth Glory vs Brisbane Strikers
Marconi Stallions vs South Melbourne
Melbourne Knights vs Parramatta Power

SUNDAY JANUARY 6 2002

Sydney United vs Adelaide City Force
Newcastle United vs Bye